

THRILLS AND CHILLS IN A SPOOKY HALLOWEEN SPECIAL!

# DRAGON+



An Unlikely Hero:

## RA SALVATORE REVEALS DRIZZT'S NEW ADVENTURE

+  
Demogorgon:  
Prince of Demons  
&  
Creative  
Halloween  
Cosplay

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

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## ISSUE 10



## DRAGON+ 10

### Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 10

*Dragon* once introduced itself to Bart Carroll, and now Bart introduces himself to *Dragon+*.



### Deadstone Cleft

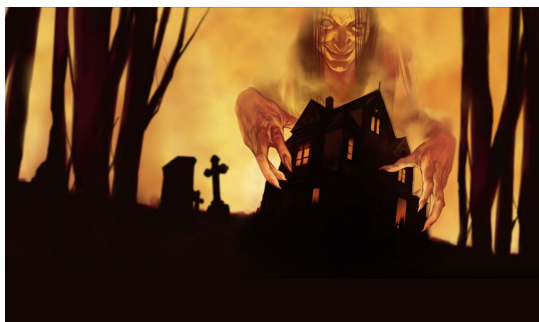
Christopher Lindsay offers a Ravenloft-style card reading...but one that hints of a giant-sized encounter.



### Imagining the Ampersand

Nothing screams “Halloween” like a finely carved pumpkin, and you’ve no doubt already admired the spooky example adorning the cover of this issue of *Dragon+*.





## Betrayal at Dungeon in the Hill

With the Halloween season upon us—and with several D&D brand members and personas involved in its new expansion—how could we not venture inside the haunted halls of *Betrayal at House on the Hill*?



## Delving into Dungeology

Join the valiant Volo for this essential guide to the Forgotten Realms.



## Dressing the Dungeon Master

Chris Perkins's costume wowed fans at PAX West 2016, but how was it made?



## Creative Halloween Cosplay

Dress yourself scary with this expert advice for the spooky season.



## Best of the DMs Guild

This month: Intriguing encounters in the Underdark and a dozen new archetypes to explore.

## An Unlikely Hero

R.A. Salvatore talks to Matt Chapman about *Hero*, the explosive finale of the Homecoming series.



## Volo's Guide to Hags/Slithering Tracker

Well met, adventurer. You seem like a curious sort who enjoys the finer things. Permit me to thrust upon you my latest masterwork, years in the making. I think you'll find it well worth your time and money. First, a warning: here there be monsters!



## Sea of Moving Ice

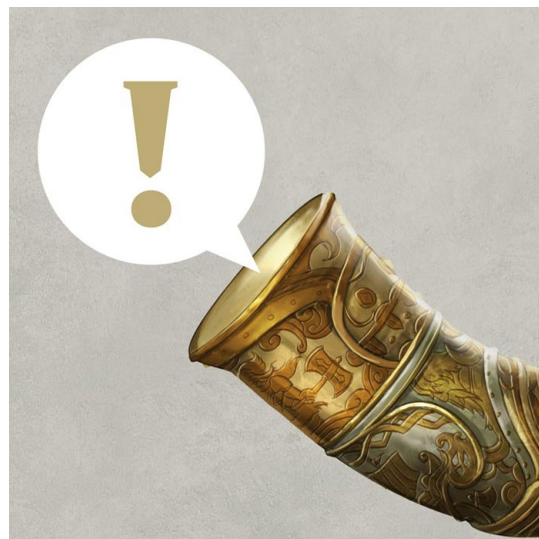
NEVERWINTER *sets sail on the Sea of Moving Ice*





## Demogorgon Prince of Demons

Thanks to *Stranger Things*, one of D&D's oldest villains is more recognizable than ever.



## Streaming Highlights

Force Grey: Giant Hunters get set to conclude their epic adventure, Acquisitions Incorporated is live at PAX West, and Ray Villafane reveals some of the secrets of fine-art pumpkin carving.

## Maps of the Month: Curse of Strahd

With Halloween upon us, what better maps to showcase than a selection from *Curse of Strahd*?



## Unearthed Arcana: The Ranger

Mike Mearls explores new approaches to D&D's ranger class

## Comic: Storm Kings Thunder

Hold of the Storm Giants

## Next Issue: Dragon 11

There's no need to cast Divination to discover next issue's goodies: we speak to Forgotten Realms creator Ed Greenwood about his latest novel, remember Dungeons & Dragons videogames gone by and dig deep into the latest action RPG Sword Coast Legends.

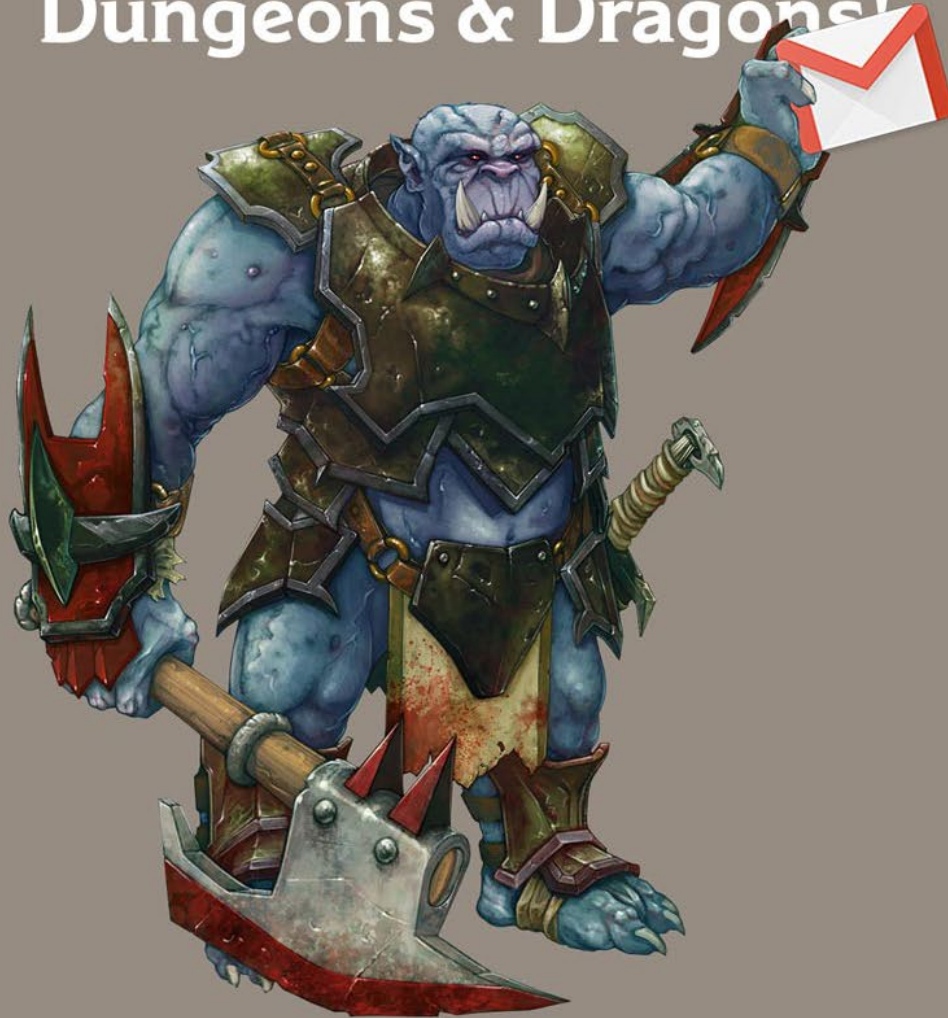


A big thank you to the extended D&D family for their help with the creation of this issue.



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# DRAGON+ 10

## Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 10

*Dragon* once introduced itself to Bart Carroll, and now Bart introduces himself to *Dragon+*.

Bart Carroll

**O**f all places, I came across my first issue of *Dragon* magazine in the back of a bike shop in Highwood, Illinois. For whatever reason, this particular shop carried a rack of roleplaying materials—a few rulebooks, adventure modules, Grenadier miniatures . . . and magazines.



I remember how issue 86 of *Dragon* pulled me over with all the force of some sort of *Bigby's beckoning hand* spell.

The cover featured knights battling atop a mystic chessboard—one of the famed chess pieces by **Denis Beauvais** that graced more than one cover of the magazine. Not that I knew that at the time. I did, however, know all about the chess room in adventure module C2, *The Ghost Tower of*

*Inverness*—having recently been killed there, since I didn't understand how chess pieces actually moved. I also played a lot of *Archon* on my Atari 800XL. And yes, that dates me very firmly to the era of the kids in *Stranger Things*.

In any case, that magazine cover spoke to me. I'd never read (or even



seen) *Dragon* before, but I suspected it had something to do with D&D even if I didn't quite know what. So what a thrill it was when I bought a copy and found the pages stuffed with material about my favorite hobby!

This was something of a revelation to me—the idea that roleplaying material could exist outside the actual rulebooks. It felt like stumbling across some theoretical particle in the wild, outside of laboratory conditions. (This makes me realize, now that I look them up, how a graviton or god particle sounds like a great enemy for the modrons.) *Dragon* 86 featured new familiars and magic items, the ecology of the slithering tracker (a monster that makes a reappearance in the new *Volo's Guide to Monsters*), a short story, and enticing ads for games and minis. That issue even included plans for a paper craft castle that wound up assembled incorrectly by my younger self (though I still proudly displayed “Great Stoney” on my childhood desk for years). I couldn't have expressed it at the time, but *Dragon* magazine became immediately important to me because of how it let me continue my immersion in the game (and gaming in general) even when not actually playing.



(Select to view)

I've been with Wizards of the Coast for several years now, in various roles. While I've worked on the D&D brand previously, for the last couple of years, I've been developing online campaigns in support of Magic: The Gathering. Now I've returned to D&D, and I couldn't be happier. Part of my new role involves helping plan *Dragon+* (on the WotC side, in cooperation with our fine partners at Dialect). What I hope we can continue to deliver with *Dragon+* are the things that drove my original interest in *Dragon*—providing you, the readers,

with material that supports your roleplaying campaigns, that entertains you between sessions, and that informs you of products that we and our partners are hard at work creating.

On that note, we need to hear your thoughts and suggestions on *Dragon+*, and I encourage you to participate in our ongoing reader surveys. Let us know how we're doing and where we might take things in future. And with that, let's go into the rest of this issue—our tenth, and coming as it is in October, a look at the spookier side of the game!

Bart Carroll, Digital Marketing Manager for D&D



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## Deadstone Cleft

Christopher Lindsay offers a Ravenloft-style card reading...but one that hints of a giant-sized encounter.

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**F**all has arrived, and Halloween is almost upon us. It's a great time for horror movies, and for one-shot games with elements of that fan-favorite genre. Hopefully, you've had an opportunity to pick up a copy of *Storm King's Thunder*, and are perhaps in the midst of that story right now. If that is the case, and if you'd like to incorporate some horror elements into your game without completely exiting from the adventure, here's an option for a one-night jaunt into the dread realm of Ravenloft that uses content available in *Storm King's Thunder*.

This particular one-shot takes place around Deadstone Cleft, an area in the adventure that is populated largely by stone giants and their allies. You'll want to read chapter 6 of the adventure, "Canyon of the

Stone Giants,” before you begin to incorporate these elements, so that you can see where the horror experience diverges from what is written in the adventure itself.

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## CHANGES OF NOTE

This article provides information regarding a new kind of stone giant referred to as a dreamwalker. This new creature (along with many others) makes its official appearance in the upcoming *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

When playing this version of Deadstone Cleft, use a stone giant dreamwalker instead of a standard stone giant when running Thane Kayalithica. By the time the characters show up, the thane has already slain a number of humans from the Uthgardt tribe that dwells in Deadstone Cleft. She has removed the heads from those petrified unfortunates and incorporated them into her torso. When Kayalithica shows up in the adventure, she appears to have a number of moaning visages peeking out from her body.

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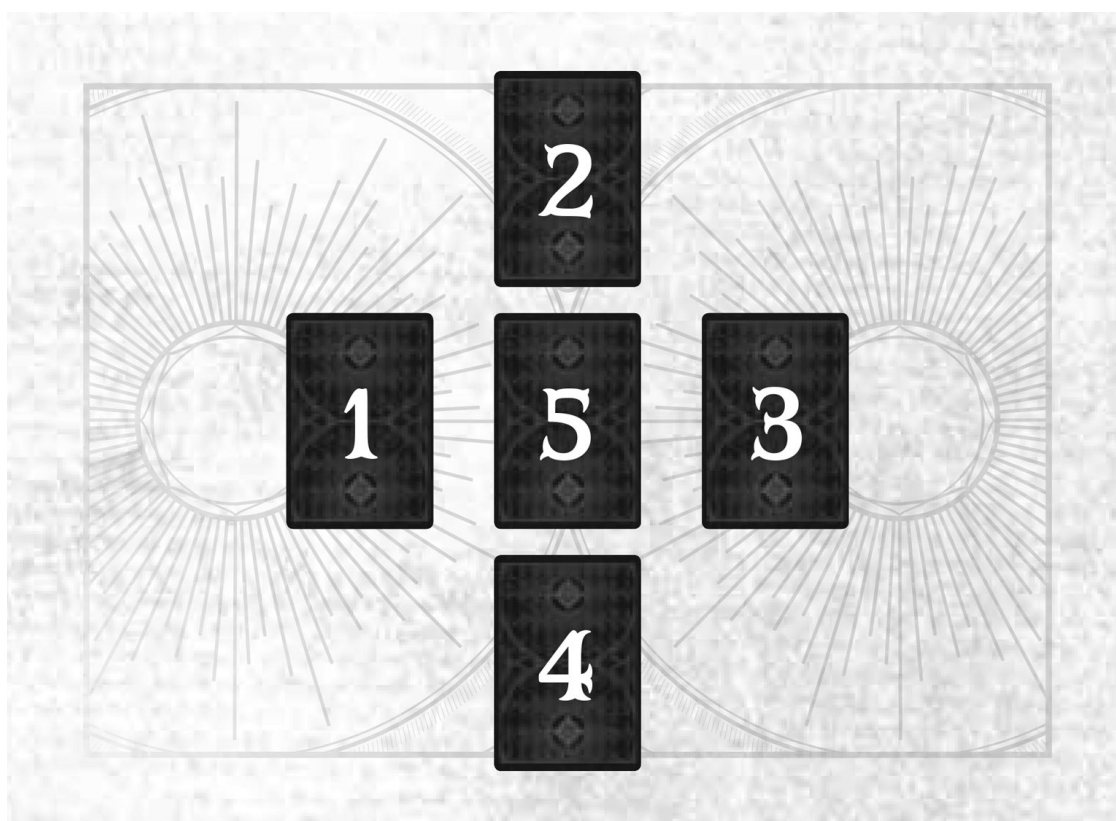
## CARD READING



As in all things related to Ravenloft, this one-shot adventure begins with a Tarokka reading from the Vistani seer, Madam Eva.

When you perform a card reading before assembling your adventure, write down the results for later reference. When you're ready to begin the card reading, remove the fourteen cards with the crown icon and shuffle them. This is the high deck. Remove the ten cards with the glyph icon and shuffle them, creating the glyph deck. Then shuffle the remaining cards as the common deck, keeping the three decks separate. Draw the top card from the glyph deck and lay it face down in the 1 position. Draw the top two cards from the common deck and lay them face down in the 2 and 3 positions. Then draw the top two cards from the high deck and lay them face down in the 4 and 5 positions, as shown:





Here and in the sections below detailing the cards of your three decks, text in *italics* is to be read aloud.

*On this night, Deadstone Cleft lies enshrouded in an evil mist. Fortunately for you, the aged Vistani seer Madam Eva has emerged from the mists to provide you with guidance. “A great evil has corrupted this place,” she says, “and its ruler, a stone giantthane of great power, is corrupted most of all. It is up to you to track her down and put an end to this most vile threat.”*

As you place the cards face down, read aloud the text below that notes each card’s purpose. You do this prior to turning them over and performing the reading.

#### Card 1

*This card tells of history. Knowledge of the ancient will help you better understand your enemy.*

The card drawn from the glyph deck provides one clue about Thane Kayalithica, who has been transformed by the mists of Ravenloft into a **stone giant dreamwalker**. Apply all the changes to her statistics from *Volo’s Guide to Monsters*, with the exception of her alignment, which is now chaotic evil. Her increased Charisma affects her

Dreamwalker's Charm by increasing the Charisma saving throw to DC 14.

#### Card 2

*This card tells of a powerful force for good and protection, a holy symbol of great hope.*

This card denotes the location of a holy symbol of Skoraeus Stonebones (god of stone giants), which is the size of a shield. As an action, the holy symbol can be presented to Thane Kayalithica, who must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the symbol's bearer acts as if under the effect of a *sanctuary* spell. This does not prevent the bearer from being affected by Kayalithica's Dreamwalker's Charm. This ability can be used once during the encounter with the stone giant thane.

#### Card 3

*This is a card of power and strength. It tells of a weapon of vengeance: a giant slayer battleaxe.*

For more information regarding this magic weapon, see chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

#### Card 4

*This card sheds light on one who will help you greatly in the battle against darkness.*

This is the location where the characters can find Hydia Moonmusk. Though written up in area 3 (Bear Cave) of the adventure, she has been investigating the changes made by the mists. Hydia is accompanied by only one of her cave bears, as the others have been slain in battle.

#### Card 5

*Your enemy is a creature of darkness and insanity, whose powers are beyond mortality. This card will lead you to her!*

Thane Kayalithica has been wandering the caverns, and can be found in any number of locations. If she is found in area 1 (Canyon Entrance), it will be after the characters have explored the rest of the tunnels. She blocks the way out in this case.

Once all five cards have been drawn and placed face down, provide

the reading for each card in order, using the read aloud text in the sections for each deck, below. For cards that provide clues to locations, the actual location is noted below the reading. This information is for the Dungeon Master only.

For the rest of the creatures in this section of *Storm King's Thunder*, consider turning all the Uthgardt barbarians into zombies. Stone giants and other creatures can also be transformed into zombies by adding the following traits and abilities to their statistics.

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.



Once you've completed the reading, let the horrific fun begin. A pervading mist spreads throughout Deadstone Cleft (which is aptly named for this occasion), and you can treat areas of your choice as



lightly obscured as a result. This one-shot adventure should take place at night, though a daylight adventure with heavily obscured areas completely encased in the mists can be appropriately creepy as well.

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## GLYPH DECK

### 1 of Glyphs

*The surface world is alien and bizarre. A great bright orb shines from a field of blue nothingness at one moment. Then the next, the sky is gray and I am buffeted by wind and water.*

### 2 of Glyphs

*Nothing on the surface is permanent, and therefore nothing is real. In this dream, promises need not be honored and life holds little value.*

### 3 of Glyphs

*I am questing, undertaking a spiritual dream journey to explore the ultimate changing. As I do so, I escape the ennui of my existence and embrace inspiration in the chaos around me.*

### 4 of Glyphs

*Once I have completed my pilgrimage, I will act as a spiritual guide to my people, having experienced true chaos and bearing wisdom of the dangers of walking in a dream.*

### 5 of Glyphs

*In my dream, the objects I possess become part of me, molding my form with their image. I must ensure that what I collect is of value if it is to add value to me.*

### 6 of Glyphs

*An all-encompassing mist clouds my vision within this dream walk, creating a false sense of permanence when I know there is none.*

### 7 of Glyphs

*I see my people laid to rest in a place where dreams are harbored and yet stone is plentiful. At times, I think they watch me as I take my leave, though I know that cannot be.*

### 8 of Glyphs

*The dream is populated by two-legged insects of all shapes and sizes.*

*Though they strike at me with steel and fire, I reach out to them and add their strength to my own.*

### 9 of Glyphs

*Voices! A choir wailing in the night all around me issues forth a silent scream at the dreaming chaos. As the way ahead becomes more obscured by mist, the actions I must take become ever so clear.*

### Master of Glyphs

*Within the mists, there waits a figure of vast darkness—a solitary being of permanence. In a land of chaos, HE is the only one I might rely upon to be true.*

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## COMMON DECK

### 1 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*If you look up high, you will see a massive resting place constructed of broken hay bales, felled trees, and wagon wreckage.*

### Area 2: Roc's Nest

### 2 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*A darkened cave is what I see, where a scattering of gnawed bones spreads amid shadowy growling.*

### Area 3: Bear Cave

### 3 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*I see a tomb open to the sky, and guarded by stone kings who scream out the silence.*

### Area 5: Thanes' Tomb

### 4 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*The Fog King lies in wait for those who would unknowingly seek its wisdom with unwise acts.*

### Area 7: Tomb of the Skodkong

### 5 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*I see a mushroom forest, surrounded by hues of blue, gold, and scarlet.*

## Area 11: Overgrown Tunnel

6 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*Bats flutter about this many-ledged tomb where the rain stands still.*

## Area 12: Warriors' Tomb

7 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*Rivulets of water pour down from the mountain, flowing over a spiky stone god whose runed orb weeps a river.*

## Area 13: Skoraeus Stonebones

8 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*The blood of the mountain flows through this place, where primordial answers are provided in giant Dwarvish runes.*

## Area 14: Temple

9 of Stars, Coins, Swords

*I see a place where blue bears meet and dine on roasted goat.*

## Area 15B: Gathering Cave

Master of Stars, Coins, Swords

*Rage and death occupy this cave, where a chanting dance now lies still.*

## Area 15C: Shaman's Cave

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# HIGH DECK

Tempter

*I see a grassy ravine with swift flowing shallows, a place where green meets stone.*

## Area 1: Canyon Entrance

Artifact

*If you look up high, you will see a massive resting place constructed of broken hay bales, felled trees, and wagon wreckage.*

## Area 2: Roc's Nest



### Beast

*A darkened cave is what I see, where a scattering of gnawed bones spreads amid shadowy growling.*

### Area 3: Bear Cave

### Raven

*I see magic mud in a dimly lit chamber of stone and death.*

### Area 4: Gorgon Mud Pool

### Broken One

*I see a tomb open to the sky, and guarded by stone kings who scream out the silence.*

### Area 5: Thanes' Tomb

### Darklord

*The Fog King lies in wait for those who would unknowingly seek its wisdom with unwise acts.*

### Area 7: Tomb of the Skodkong

### Donjon

*I see a mushroom forest, surrounded by hues of blue, gold, and scarlet.*

### Area 11: Overgrown Tunnel

### Seer

*Bats flutter about this many-ledged tomb where the rain stands still.*

### Area 12: Warrior's Tomb

### Ghost

*Rivulets of water pour down from the mountain, flowing over a spiky stone god whose runed orb weeps a river.*

### Area 13: Skoraeus Stonebones

### Executioner

*The blood of the mountain flows through this place, where primordial answers are provided in giant Dwarvish runes.*

### Area 14: Temple

Marionette

*Spirits of strength conjure here each day at dawn.*

Area 15A: Beer Barrel

Horseman

*I see a place where blue bears meet and dine on roasted goat.*

Area 15B: Gathering Cave

Innocent

*Rage and death occupy this cave, where a chanting dance now lies still.*

Area 15C: Shaman's Cave

Mists

*I see a sleeping place where prisoners were once fed iron foods.*

Area 15D: Rust Monsters' Cave

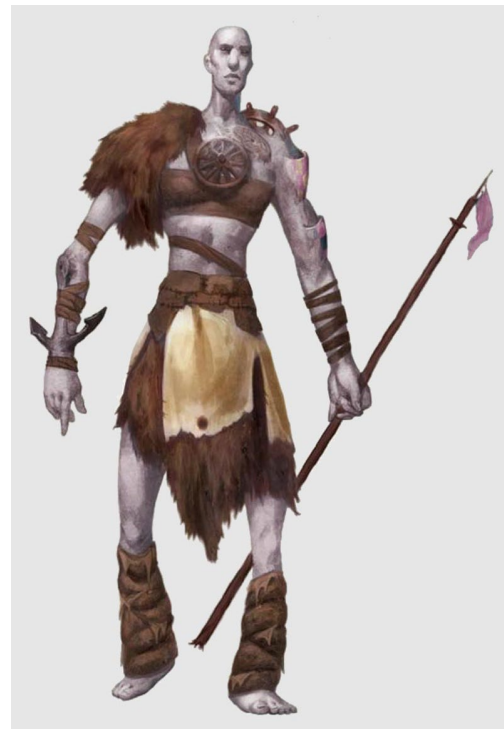
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## NEW MONSTER

Stone Giant Dreamwalker

The surface of the world is an alien realm to stone giants: fluctuating, temporary, exposed to gusting wind and sudden rain. It is as wildly changeable as a dream, and that's how they regard it—as a dream. Nothing there is permanent, so nothing there is real. What happens on the surface doesn't matter. Promises and bargains made there needn't be honored. Life and even art hold less value there.

***Dream Dwellers.*** Stone giants sometimes go on dream quests in the surface world, seeking inspiration for their art, to break a decades-long ennui, or out of simple curiosity. Some who go on these quests let themselves become lost in the dream. Other stone giants are banished to the surface as punishment. Regardless



of the reason, if they don't take shelter under stone, such individuals can become dreamwalkers.

Dreamwalkers occupy an odd place of respect outside of stone giant ordning. They are considered outcasts, but their familiarity with the surface world makes them valuable guides, and their insights can help other stone giants grasp the dangers of living in a dream.

***Mad Wanderers.*** Dreamwalkers are driven mad by isolation, shame, and their unendingly alien surroundings, and this madness leeches out into the world around them, affecting other creatures that get too close. Believing that they're living in a dream and that their actions have no real consequences, dreamwalkers act as they please, becoming forces of chaos. As they travel the world, they collect objects and creatures that seem especially significant in their mad minds. Over time, the collected things accrete to their bodies, becoming encased in stone.

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Stone Giant PDF

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## Ravenloft, Revisited

Earlier this year, the winners of the 2016 ENnie Awards—an annual fan-based celebration of excellence in tabletop roleplaying gaming—were announced at Gen Con. We were thrilled and honored when *Curse of Strahd* took home three ENnies:



- **Winner (Gold): Best Adventure:** Dungeons & Dragons ( *Curse of Strahd* )
- **Winner (Gold): Best Cover Art:** Dungeons & Dragons ( *Curse of Strahd* )
- **Winner (Silver): Product of the Year:** Dungeons & Dragons ( *Curse of Strahd* )

In issue 6 of *Dragon+*, we showcased *Curse of Strahd* by offering the free preview adventure, *Death House*. For those who might have missed it, we'd recommend it to you now as a potential Halloween-themed scenario. As an added feature, we'd also like to offer the **Death House map (both tagged and untagged)** for your use.

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[Death House PDF](#)



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## STONE GIANT DREAMWALKER

Huge giant (stone giant), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 161 (14d12 + 70)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +9, Wis +3

**Skills** Athletics +14, Perception +3

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Dreamwalker's Charm.** An enemy that starts its turn within 30 feet of the giant must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, provided that the giant isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the giant. A creature charmed in this way can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once it succeeds on the saving throw, the creature is immune to this giant's Dreamwalker's Charm for 24 hours.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The giant makes two attacks with its greatclub.

**Greatclub.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Petrifying Touch.** The giant touches one Medium or smaller creature within 10 feet of it that is charmed by it. The target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes petrified, and the giant can adhere the target to its stony body. *Greater restoration* spells and other magic that can undo petrification have no effect on a petrified creature on the giant unless the giant is dead, in which case the magic works normally, freeing the petrified creature as well as ending the petrified condition on it.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## STORM GIANT QUINTESSENT

To forestall the inevitable, some storm giants approaching the end of their natural life spans seek an escape from death. They plumb the depths of their powerful connection to the elements and disperse themselves into nature, literally transforming into semiconscious storms. The blizzard that rages unendingly around a mountain peak, the vortex that swirls around a remote island, or the thunderstorm that howls ceaselessly up and down a rugged coastline could, in fact, be the undying form of a storm giant clinging to existence.

**Elemental Weapons.** A storm giant quintessent sheds its armor and weapons, but gains the power to form makeshift weapons out of thin air. When the giant has no further use of them, or when the giant dies, its elemental weapons disappear.



**Forsaken Form.** A storm giant quintessent can revert to its true giant form on a whim. The change is temporary but can be maintained long enough for the giant to communicate with a mortal, carry out a short task, or defend its home against aggressors.

### A QUINTESSENT'S LAIR

A storm giant quintessent has no need for castles or dungeon lairs. Its lair is usually a secluded region or prominent geographic feature, such as a mountain peak, a great waterfall, a remote island, a fog-shrouded loch, a beautiful coral reef, or a windswept desert bluff. As befits the environment, the storm in which the giant lives could be a blizzard, a typhoon, a thunderstorm, or a sandstorm.

**Lair Actions.** A storm giant quintessent can use lair actions in giant form and while transformed into a storm. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the giant can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the giant can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The giant creates a thunderclap centered on a point anywhere in its lair. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be deafened until the end of its next turn.
- The giant creates a 20-foot-radius sphere of fog (or murky water within water) centered on a point anywhere in its lair. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. The fog lasts until the



# DEATH HOUSE

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# DEATH HOUSE

You can run *Curse of Strahd* for 1st-level characters with the help of this optional mini-adventure, which is designed to advance characters to 3rd level. Players creating 1st-level characters can use the haunted one character background in appendix A, or they can pick backgrounds from the *Player's Handbook* as normal.

Before the characters can explore the haunted townhouse known as Death House, you need to guide them to the village of Barovia. The “Creeping Fog” adventure hook in chapter 1 works best, as it introduces few distractions. Once the characters arrive in Strahd’s domain, steer them to the village. For the duration of this introductory adventure, any attempt by the characters to explore other locations in Strahd’s domain causes the mists of Ravenloft to block their path.

## LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

In this mini-adventure, the characters gain levels by accomplishing specific goals, rather than by slaying monsters. These milestones are as follows:

- Characters who gain access to the secret stairs in the attic (area 21) advance to 2nd level. The stairs appear only under certain circumstances.
- Characters advance to 3rd level once they escape from the house (see the “Endings” section).

## HISTORY

Death House is the name given to an old row house in the village of Barovia (area E7 on the village map). The house has been burned to the ground many times, only to rise from the ashes time and again—by its own will or that of Strahd. Locals give the building a wide berth for fear of antagonizing the evil spirits believed to haunt it.

The wealthy family that built the house practiced the dark arts. Through seduction and indoctrination, they expanded their cult to include a small yet nefarious circle of friends. When word got out, the rest of the village turned a blind eye to the house and the nightly debaucheries happening within it.

The cult tried to summon malevolent extraplanar entities with no success. The cultists also preyed on visitors, sacrificed them in bizarre rituals, and hosted morbid banquets to feast on their corpses. When nothing came of these ritualized murders, the cultists’ activities became thinly disguised excuses to indulge their lurid fantasies. The ranks of the cult thinned as members began to lose interest in the debacle.

Then Strahd von Zarovich arrived.

The cultists regarded Strahd as a messiah sent to them by the Dark Powers. Drawn to Strahd like moths to a flame, they pledged their devotion for a promise of immortality, but Strahd turned them away, deeming the cult and its leaders unworthy of his attention. The cultists withdrew to Death House in despair.

The cult’s habit of trapping and devouring wayward visitors proved to be its downfall. On one occasion, the cult snared a band of adventurers whom Strahd had lured to his domain to be his playthings. A black car-

riage arrived at Death House soon thereafter, and from out of its black heart stepped the vampire himself. The cultists tried to impress Strahd. In response, he slaughtered them for slaying his playthings. Centuries later, the cultists’ spirits haunt the dungeons under the house. The building itself, it seems, is unwilling to let the cult be forgotten.

## ROSE AND THORN

The characters are pulled into Strahd’s domain by the mists of Ravenloft. Forced to follow a lonely road (area A), they eventually arrive at the village of Barovia (area E). Once they reach the village, read:

The gravel road leads to a village, its tall houses dark as tombstones. Nestled among these solemn dwellings are a handful of closed-up shops. Even the tavern is shut tight.

A soft whimpering draws your eye toward a pair of children standing in the middle of an otherwise lifeless street.

The children are ten-year-old Rosavalda (“Rose”) and her seven-year-old brother, Thornboldt (“Thorn”). Thorn is weeping and clutching a stuffed doll. Rose is trying to hush the boy.

If the characters approach the children or call out to them, add the following:

After shushing the boy, the girl turns to you and says, “There’s a monster in our house!” She then points to a tall brick row house that has seen better days. Its windows are dark. It has a gated portico on the ground floor, and the rusty gate is slightly ajar. The houses on either side are abandoned, their windows and doors boarded up.

Characters who question the children learn the following information:

- The children don’t know what the “monster” looks like, but they’ve heard its terrible howls.
- Their parents (Gustav and Elisabeth Durst) keep the monster trapped in the basement.
- There’s a baby (Walter) in the third-floor nursery. (Untrue, but the children believe it.)

Rose and Thorn say that they won’t go back in the house until they know the monster is gone. They can be convinced to wait in the portico (area 1A) while the characters search the house. Although they appear to be flesh-and-blood children, Rose and Thorn are actually illusions created by the house to lure the characters inside. The children don’t know that they’re illusions but vanish if attacked or forced into the house.



The children died of starvation centuries ago after their insane parents locked them in the attic and forgot about them. They were too young and innocent to understand that their parents were guilty of heinous crimes. Their parents told them stories about a monster in the basement to keep the children from going down to the dungeon level. The “terrible howls” they heard were actually the screams of the cult’s victims.



## THE MISTS

Characters who remain outside the house can see the mists close in around them, swallowing up the rest of the village. As more buildings disappear into the mists, the characters are left with little choice but to seek refuge in the house. The mists stop short of entering the house but engulf anyone outside (see chapter 2, “The Lands of Barovia,” for information on the mists’ effect).

## AREAS OF THE HOUSE

The following areas correspond to labels on the map of the house on page 216.

### 1. ENTRANCE

A wrought-iron gate with hinges on one side and a lock on the other fills the archway of a stone portico (area 1A). The gate is unlocked, and its rusty hinges shriek when the gate is opened. Oil lamps hang from the portico ceiling by chains, flanking a set of oaken doors that open into a grand foyer (area 1B).

Hanging on the south wall of the foyer is a shield emblazoned with a coat-of-arms (a stylized golden

### DEATH HOUSE’S FEATURES

Death House is aware of its surroundings and all creatures within it. Its goal is to continue the work of the cult by luring visitors to their doom. Various important features of the house are summarized here.

The house has four stories (including the attic), with two balconies on the third floor—one facing the front of the house, the other facing the back. The house has wooden floors throughout, and all windows have hinges that allow them to swing outward.

The rooms on the first and second floors are free of dust and signs of age. The floorboards and wall panels are well oiled, the drapes and wallpaper haven’t faded, and the furniture looks new. No effort has been made to preserve the contents of the third floor or the attic. These areas are dusty and drafty, everything within them is old and draped in cobwebs, and the floorboards groan underfoot.

Ceilings vary in height by floor. The first floor has 10-foot-high ceilings, the second floor has 12-foot-high ceilings, the third floor has 8-foot-high ceilings, and the attic has 13-foot-high ceilings.

None of the rooms in the house are lit when the characters arrive, although most areas contain working oil lamps or fireplaces.

Characters can burn the house to the ground if they want, but any destruction to the house is temporary. After 1d10 days, the house begins to repair itself. Ashes sweep together to form blackened timbers, which then turn back into a sturdy wooden frame around which walls begin to materialize. Destroyed furnishings are likewise repaired. It takes 2d6 hours for the house to complete its resurrection. Items taken from the house aren’t replaced, nor are undead that are destroyed. The dungeon level isn’t considered part of the house and can’t repair itself in this fashion.

windmill on a red field), flanked by framed portraits of stony-faced aristocrats (long-dead members of the Durst family). Mahogany-framed double doors leading from the foyer to the main hall (area 2A) are set with panes of stained glass.

### 2. MAIN HALL

A wide hall (area 2A) runs the width of the house, with a black marble fireplace at one end and a sweeping, red marble staircase at the other. Mounted on the wall above the fireplace is a longsword (nonmagical) with a windmill cameo worked into the hilt. The wood-paneled walls are ornately sculpted with images of vines, flowers, nymphs, and satyrs. Characters who search the walls for secret doors or otherwise inspect the paneling can, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, see serpents and skulls inconspicuously woven into the wall designs. The decorative paneling follows the staircase as it circles upward to the second floor.

A cloakroom (area 2B) has several black cloaks hanging from hooks on the walls. A top hat sits on a high shelf.

### 3. DEN OF WOLVES

This oak-paneled room looks like a hunter’s den. Mounted above the fireplace is a stag’s head, and positioned around the outskirts of the room are three stuffed wolves.



Two padded chairs draped in animal furs face the hearth, with an oak table between them supporting a cask of wine, two carved wooden goblets, a pipe rack, and a candelabrum. A chandelier hangs above a cloth-covered table surrounded by four chairs.

Two cabinets stand against the walls. The east cabinet sports a lock that can be picked with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. It holds a heavy crossbow, a light crossbow, a hand crossbow, and 20 bolts for each weapon. The north cabinet is unlocked and holds a small box containing a deck of playing cards and an assortment of wine glasses.

#### TRAPDOOR

A trapdoor is hidden in the southwest corner of the floor. It can't be detected or opened until the characters approach it from the underside (see area 32). Until then, Death House supernaturally hides the trapdoor.

### 4. KITCHEN AND PANTRY

The kitchen (area 4A) is tidy, with dishware, cookware, and utensils neatly placed on shelves. A worktable has a cutting board and rolling pin atop it. A stone, dome-shaped oven stands near the east wall, its bent iron stovepipe connecting to a hole in the ceiling. Behind the stove and to the left is a thin door leading to a well-stocked pantry (area 4B). All the food in the pantry appears fresh but tastes bland.

#### DUMBWAITER

Behind a small door in the southwest corner of the kitchen is a dumbwaiter—a 2-foot-wide stone shaft containing a wooden elevator box attached to a simple rope-and-pulley mechanism that must be operated manually. The shaft connects to areas 7A (the servants' quarters) and 12A (the master bedroom). Hanging on the wall next to the dumbwaiter is a tiny brass bell attached by wires to buttons in those other areas.

A Small character can squeeze into the elevator box with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The dumbwaiter's rope-and-pulley mechanism can support 200 pounds of weight before breaking.

### 5. DINING ROOM

The centerpiece of this wood-paneled dining room is a carved mahogany table surrounded by eight high-backed chairs with sculpted armrests and cushioned seats. A crystal chandelier hangs above the table, which is covered with resplendent silverware and crystalware polished to a dazzling shine. Mounted above the marble fireplace is a mahogany-framed painting of an alpine vale.

The wall paneling is carved with elegant images of deer among the trees. Characters who search the walls for secret doors or otherwise inspect the paneling can, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, see twisted faces carved into the tree trunks and wolves lurking amid the carved foliage.

Red silk drapes cover the windows, and a tapestry depicting hunting dogs and horse-mounted aristocrats chasing after a wolf hangs from an iron rod bolted to the south wall.

The silverware tarnishes, the crystal cracks, the portrait fades, and the tapestry rots if removed from the house.

### 6. UPPER HALL

Unlit oil lamps are mounted on the walls of this elegant hall. Hanging above the mantelpiece is a wood-framed portrait of the Durst family: Gustav and Elisabeth Durst with their two smiling children, Rose and Thorn. Cradled in the father's arms is a swaddled baby, which the mother regards with a hint of scorn.

Standing suits of armor flank wooden doors in the east and west walls. Each suit of armor clutches a spear and has a visored helm shaped like a wolf's head. The doors are carved with dancing youths, although close inspection and a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the youths aren't really dancing but fighting off swarms of bats.

The red marble staircase that started on the first floor continues its upward spiral to area 11. A cold draft can be felt coming down the steps.

### 7. SERVANTS' ROOM

An undecorated bedroom (area 7A) contains a pair of beds with straw-stuffed mattresses. At the foot of each bed is an empty footlocker. Tidy servants' uniforms hang from hooks in the adjoining closet (area 7B).

#### DUMBWAITER

A dumbwaiter in the corner of the west wall has a button on the wall next to it. Pressing the button rings the tiny bell in area 4A.

### 8. LIBRARY

The master of the house used to spend many hours here before his descent into madness.

Red velvet drapes cover the windows of this room. An exquisite mahogany desk and a matching high-back chair face the entrance and the fireplace, above which hangs a framed picture of a windmill perched atop a rocky crag. Situated in corners of the room are two overstuffed chairs. Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves line the south wall. A rolling wooden ladder allows one to more easily reach the high shelves.

The desk has several items resting atop it: an oil lamp, a jar of ink, a quill pen, a tinderbox, and a letter kit containing a red wax candle, four blank sheets of parchment, and a wooden seal bearing the Durst family's insignia (a windmill). The desk drawer is empty except for an iron key, which unlocks the door to area 20.

The bookshelves hold hundreds of tomes covering a range of topics including history, warfare, and alchemy. There are also several shelves containing first-edition collected works of poetry and fiction. The books rot and fall apart if taken from the house.



### SECRET DOOR

A secret door behind one bookshelf can be unlocked and swung open by pulling on a switch disguised to look like a red-covered book with a blank spine. A character inspecting the bookshelf spots the fake book with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Unless the secret door is propped open, springs in the hinges cause it to close on its own. Beyond the secret door lies area 9.

## 9. SECRET ROOM

This secret room contains bookshelves packed with tomes describing fiend-summoning rituals and the necromantic rituals of a cult called the Priests of Osybus. The rituals are bogus, which any character can ascertain after studying the books for 1 hour and succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

A heavy wooden chest with clawed iron feet stands against the south wall, its lid half-closed. Sticking out of the chest is a skeleton in leather armor. Close inspection reveals that the skeleton belongs to a human who triggered a poisoned dart trap. Three darts are stuck in the dead adventurer's armor and ribcage. The dart-firing mechanism inside the chest no longer functions.

Clutched in the skeleton's left hand is a letter bearing the seal of Strahd von Zarovich, which the adventurer tried to remove from the chest. Written in flowing script, the letter reads as follows:

*My most pathetic servant,*

*I am not a messiah sent to you by the Dark Powers of this land. I have not come to lead you on a path to immortality. However many souls you have bled on your hidden altar, however many visitors you have tortured in your dungeon, know that you are not the ones who brought me to this beautiful land. You are but worms writhing in my earth.*

*You say that you are cursed, your fortunes spent. You abandoned love for madness, took solace in the bosom of another woman, and sired a stillborn son. Cursed by darkness? Of that I have no doubt. Save you from your wretchedness? I think not. I much prefer you as you are.*

*Your dread lord and master,  
Strahd von Zarovich*

### TREASURE

The chest contains three blank books with black leather covers (worth 25 gp each), three spell scrolls (*bleed*, *protection from poison*, and *spiritual weapon*), the deed to the house, the deed to a windmill, and a signed will. The windmill referred to in the second deed is situated in the mountains east of Vallaki (see chapter 6, "Old Bonegrinder"). The will is signed by Gustav and Elisabeth Durst and bequeathes the house, the windmill, and all other family property to Rosavalda and Thornboldt Durst in the event of their parents' deaths. The books, scrolls, deeds, and will age markedly if taken from the house but remain intact.

## 10. CONSERVATORY

Gossamer drapes cover the windows of this elegantly appointed hall, which has a brass-plated chandelier

hanging from the ceiling. Upholstered chairs line the walls, and stained-glass wall hangings depict beautiful men, women, and children singing and playing instruments.

A harpsichord with a bench rests in the northwest corner. Near the fireplace is a large standing harp. Alabaster figurines of well-dressed dancers adorn the mantelpiece. Close inspection of them reveals that several are carvings of well-dressed skeletons.

## 11. BALCONY

Characters who climb the red marble staircase to its full height come to a dusty balcony with a suit of black plate armor standing against one wall, draped in cobwebs. This suit of **animated armor** attacks as soon as it takes damage or a character approaches within 5 feet of it. It fights until destroyed.

Oil lamps are mounted on the oak-paneled walls, which are carved with woodland scenes of trees, falling leaves, and tiny critters. Characters who search the walls for secret doors or otherwise inspect the paneling can, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, notice tiny corpses hanging from the trees and worms bursting up from the ground.

### SECRET DOOR

A secret door in the west wall can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. It pushes open easily to reveal a cobweb-filled wooden staircase leading up to the attic.

## 12. MASTER SUITE

The double doors to this room have dusty panes of stained glass set into them. Designs in the glass resemble windmills.

The dusty, cobweb-filled master bedroom (area 12A) has burgundy drapes covering the windows. Furnishings include a four-poster bed with embroidered curtains and tattered gossamer veils, a matching pair of empty wardrobes, a vanity with a wood-framed mirror and jewelry box (see "Treasure"), and a padded chair. A rotting tiger-skin rug lies on the floor in front of the fireplace, which has a dust-covered portrait of Gustav and Elisabeth Durst hanging above it. A web-filled parlor in the southwest corner contains a table and two chairs. Resting on the dusty tablecloth is an empty porcelain bowl and a matching jug.

A door facing the foot of the bed has a full-length mirror mounted on it. The door opens to reveal an empty, dust-choked closet (area 12B). A door in the parlor leads to an outside balcony (area 12C).

### DUMBWAITER

A dumbwaiter in the corner of the west wall has a button on the wall next to it. Pressing the button rings the tiny bell in area 4A.

### TREASURE

The jewelry box on the vanity is made of silver with gold filigree (worth 75 gp). It contains three gold rings (worth 25 gp each) and a thin platinum necklace with a topaz pendant (worth 750 gp).



### 13. BATHROOM

This dark room contains a wooden tub with clawed feet, a small iron stove with a kettle resting atop it, and a barrel under a spigot in the east wall. A cistern on the roof used to collect rainwater, which was borne down a pipe to the spigot; however, the plumbing no longer works.

### 14. STORAGE ROOM

Dusty shelves line the walls of this room. A few of the shelves have folded sheets, blankets, and old bars of soap on them. A cobweb-covered **broom of animated attack** (see appendix D) leans against the far wall; it attacks any creature approaching within 5 feet of it.

### 15. NURSEMAID'S SUITE

Dust and cobwebs shroud an elegantly appointed bedroom (area 15A) and an adjoining nursery (area 15B). Double doors set with panes of stained glass pull open to reveal a balcony (area 15C) overlooking the front of the house.

The bedroom once belonged to the family's nursemaid. The master of the house and the nursemaid had an affair, which led to the birth of a stillborn baby named Walter. The cult slew the nursemaid shortly thereafter. Unless the characters already defeated it in area 18, the nursemaid's spirit haunts the bedroom as a **specter**. The specter manifests and attacks when a character opens the door to the nursery. The specter resembles a terrified, skeletally thin young woman; it can't speak or be reasoned with.

The bedroom contains a large bed, two end tables, and an empty wardrobe. Mounted on the wall next to the wardrobe is a full-length mirror with an ornate wooden frame carved to look like ivy and berries. Characters who search the wall for secret doors or otherwise inspect the mirror can, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, notice eyeballs among the berries. The wall behind the mirror has a secret door in it (see "Secret Door" below).

The nursery contains a crib covered with a hanging black shroud. When characters part the shroud, they see a tightly wrapped, baby-sized bundle lying in the crib. Characters who unwrap the blanket find nothing inside it.

#### SECRET DOOR

A secret door behind the mirror can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. It pushes open easily to reveal a cobweb-filled wooden staircase leading up to the attic.

### 16. ATTIC HALL

This bare hall is choked with dust and cobwebs.

#### LOCKED DOOR

The door to area 20 is held shut with a padlock. Its key is kept in the library (area 8), but the lock can also be picked with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

### 17. SPARE BEDROOM

This dust-choked room contains a slender bed, a nightstand, a small iron stove, a writing desk with a stool, an empty wardrobe, and a rocking chair. A smiling doll in a lacy yellow dress sits in the northern window box, cobwebs draping it like a wedding veil.

### 18. STORAGE ROOM

This dusty chamber is packed with old furniture (chairs, coat racks, standing mirrors, dress mannequins, and the like), all draped in dusty white sheets. Near an iron stove, underneath one of the sheets, is an unlocked wooden trunk containing the skeletal remains of the family's nursemaid, wrapped in a tattered bedsheet stained with dry blood. A character inspecting the remains and succeeding on a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check can verify that the woman was stabbed to death by multiple knife wounds.

If the characters disturb the remains, the nursemaid's **specter** appears and attacks unless it was previously defeated in area 15.

#### SECRET DOOR

A secret door in the east wall appears only when certain conditions are met; see area 21 for more information.

### 19. SPARE BEDROOM

This web-filled room contains a slender bed, a nightstand, a rocking chair, an empty wardrobe, and a small iron stove.

### 20. CHILDREN'S ROOM

The door to this room is locked from the outside (see area 16 for details).

This room contains a bricked-up window flanked by two dusty, wood-framed beds sized for children. Closer to the door is a toy chest with windmills painted on its sides and a dollhouse that's a perfect replica of the dreary edifice in which you stand. These furnishings are draped in cobwebs. Lying in the middle of the floor are two small skeletons wearing tattered but familiar clothing. The smaller of the two cradles a stuffed doll that you also recognize.

The Durst children, Rose and Thorn, were neglected by their parents and locked in this room until they starved to death. Their small skeletons lie in the middle of the floor, plain as day, wearing tattered clothing that the characters recognize as belonging to the children. Thorn's skeleton cradles the boy's stuffed doll.

The toy chest contains an assortment of stuffed animals and toys. Characters who search the dollhouse and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check find all of the house's secret doors, including one in the attic that leads to a spiral staircase (a miniature replica of area 21).

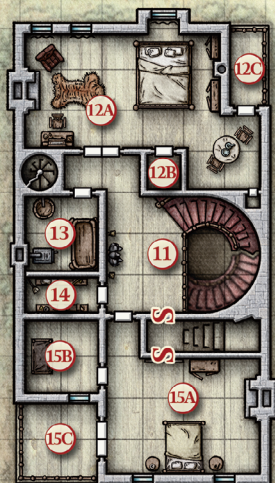
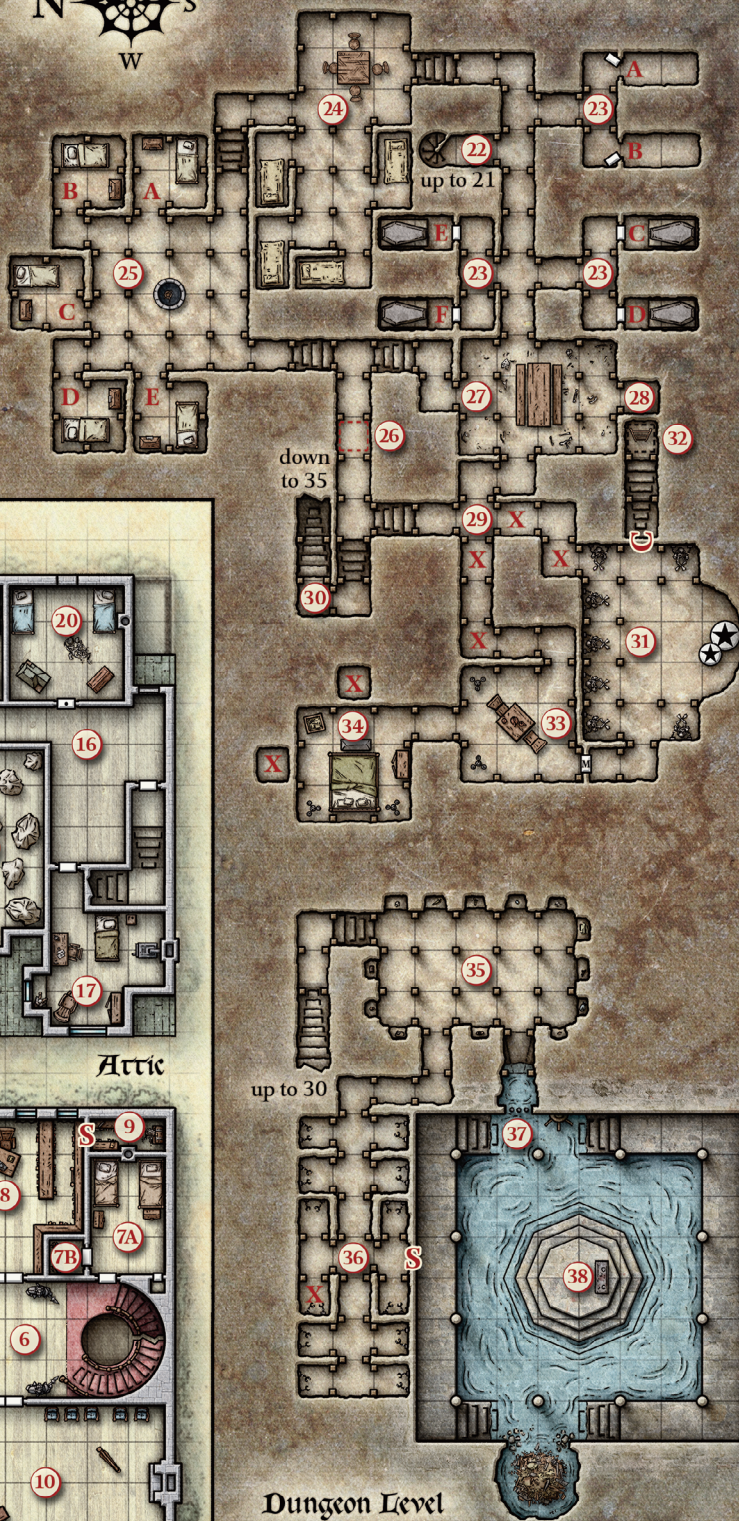




Front View



# Death House



Third Floor



Attic



First Floor



Second Floor

One square = 5 feet



## ROSE AND THORN

If either the dollhouse or the chest is disturbed, the ghosts of Rose and Thorn appear in the middle of the room. Use the **ghost** statistics in the *Monster Manual*, with the following modifications:

- The ghosts are Small and lawful good.
- They have 35 (10d6) hit points each.
- They lack the Horrifying Visage action.
- They speak Common and have a challenge rating of 3 (700 XP).

The children don't like it when the characters disturb their toys, but they fight only in self-defense. Unlike the illusions outside the house, these children know that they're dead. If asked how they died, Rose and Thorn explain that their parents locked them in the attic to protect them from "the monster in the basement," and that they died from hunger. If asked how one gets to the basement, Rose points to the dollhouse and says, "There's a secret door in the attic." Characters who then search the dollhouse for secret doors gain advantage on their Wisdom (Perception) checks to find them.

The children fear abandonment. If one or more characters try to leave, the ghost-children attempt to possess them. If one of the ghosts possesses a character, allow the player to retain control of the character, but assign the character one of the following flaws:

- A character possessed by Rose gains the following flaw: "I like being in charge and get angry when other people tell me what to do."
- A character possessed by Thorn gains the following flaw: "I'm scared of everything, including my own shadow, and weep with despair when things don't go my way."

A character possessed by the ghost of Rose or Thorn won't willingly leave Death House or the dungeon below it. Both ghosts can be intimidated into leaving their hosts with a successful DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation) check made as an action.

A ghost reduced to 0 hit points can reform at dawn the next day. The only way to put the children's spirits to rest is to put their skeletal remains in their tombs (areas 23E and 23F). The children don't know this, however.

## DEVELOPMENT

If the party lays the children's spirits to rest, each character gains inspiration (see "Inspiration" in chapter 4, "Personality and Background," of the *Player's Handbook*).

## 21. SECRET STAIRS

A narrow spiral staircase made of creaky wood is contained within a 5-foot-wide shaft of mortared stone that starts in the attic and descends 50 feet to the dungeon level, passing through the lower levels of the house as it makes its descent. Thick cobwebs fill the shaft and reduce visibility in the staircase to 5 feet.

The secret door and shaft don't exist until the house reveals them, which can happen in one of two ways:

- The characters find Strahd's letter in the secret room behind the library (area 9).

## DUNGEON FEATURES

The dungeon level underneath Death House is carved out of earth, clay, and rock. The tunnels are 4 feet wide by 7 feet high with timber braces at 5-foot intervals. Rooms are 8 feet tall and supported by thick wooden posts with crossbeams. The only exception is area 38, which has a 16-foot-high ceiling supported by stone pillars. Characters without darkvision must provide their own light sources, as the dungeon is unlit.

As the characters explore the dungeon, they see centuries-old human footprints in the earthen floor leading every which way.

- The characters find the replica secret door in the attic of the dollhouse (area 20).

Once the house wills the secret door into existence, characters find it automatically if they search the wall (no ability check required). Characters who descend the spiral staircase end up in area 22.

## 22. DUNGEON LEVEL ACCESS

The wooden spiral staircase from the attic ends here. A narrow tunnel stretches southward before branching east and west.

### GHOSTLY CHANTING

From the moment they arrive in the dungeon, the characters can hear an eerie, incessant chant echoing throughout. It's impossible to gauge where the sound is coming from until the characters reach area 26 or 29. They can't discern its words until they reach area 35.

## 23. FAMILY CRYPTS

Several crypts have been hewn from the earth. Each crypt is sealed with a stone slab unless noted otherwise. Removing a slab from its fitting requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check; using a crowbar or the like grants advantage on the check.

### 23A. EMPTY CRYPT

The blank stone slab meant to seal this crypt leans against a nearby wall. The crypt is empty.

### 23B. WALTER'S CRYPT

The stone slab meant to seal this crypt leans against a nearby wall. Etched into it is the name Walter Durst. The crypt is empty.

### 23C. GUSTAV'S CRYPT

The stone slab is etched with the name Gustav Durst. The chamber beyond contains an empty coffin atop a stone bier.

### 23D. ELISABETH'S CRYPT

The stone slab is etched with the name Elisabeth Durst. The crypt contains a stone bier with an empty coffin atop it. A **swarm of insects** (centipedes) boils out of the back wall and attacks if the coffin is disturbed.

### 23E. ROSE'S CRYPT

The stone slab is etched with the name Rosavalda Durst. The chamber beyond contains an empty coffin on a stone bier.



If Rose's skeletal remains (see area 20) are placed in the coffin, the child's ghost finds peace and disappears forever. A character possessed by Rose's ghost when this occurs is no longer possessed (see also the "Development" section in area 20).

### 23F. THORN'S CRYPT

The stone slab is etched with the name Thornboldt Durst. The chamber beyond contains an empty coffin on a stone bier.

If Thorn's skeletal remains (see area 20) are placed in the coffin, the child's ghost finds peace and disappears forever. A character possessed by Thorn's ghost when this occurs is no longer possessed (see also the "Development" section in area 20).

## 24. CULT INITIATES' QUARTERS

A wooden table and four chairs stand at the east end of this room. To the west are four alcoves containing moldy straw pallets.

## 25. WELL AND CULTIST QUARTERS

A 4-foot-diameter well shaft with a 3-foot-high stone lip descends 30 feet to a water-filled cistern. A wooden bucket hangs from a rope-and-pulley mechanism bolted to the crossbeams above the well.

Five side rooms once served as quarters for senior cultists. Each contains a wood-framed bed with a moldy straw mattress and a wooden chest to hold personal belongings. Each chest is secured with a rusty iron padlock that can be picked with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

### TREASURE

In addition to some worthless personal effects, each chest contains one or more valuable items.

- 25A.** This room's chest contains 11 gp and 60 sp in a pouch made of human skin.
- 25B.** This room's chest contains three moss agates (worth 10 gp each) in a folded piece of black cloth.
- 25C.** This room's chest contains a black leather eyepatch with a carnelian (worth 50 gp) sewn into it.
- 25D.** This room's chest contains an ivory hairbrush with silver bristles (worth 25 gp).
- 25E.** This room's chest contains a silvered shortsword (worth 110 gp).

## 26. HIDDEN SPIKED PIT

The ghostly chanting heard throughout the dungeon gets discernibly louder as one heads west along this tunnel. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals an absence of footprints. Characters searching the floor for traps find a 5-foot-long, 10-foot-deep pit hidden under several rotted wooden planks, all hidden under a thin layer of dirt. The pit has sharpened wooden spikes at the bottom. The first character to step on the cover falls through, landing prone and taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall plus 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the spikes.

## 27. DINING HALL

This room contains a plain wooden table flanked by long benches. Moldy humanoid bones lie strewn on the dirt floor—the remains of the cult's vile banquets.

In the middle of the south wall is a darkened alcove (area 28). Characters who approach within 5 feet of the alcove provoke the creature that lurks there.

## 28. LARDER

This alcove contains a **grick** that slithers out to attack the first character it sees within 5 feet of it. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score under 12 is surprised by it. The alcove is otherwise empty.

## 29. GHOULISH ENCOUNTER

The ghostly chanting heard throughout the dungeon is noticeably louder to the north. When one or more characters reach the midpoint of the four-way tunnel intersection, four **ghouls** (former cultists) rise up out of the ground in the spaces marked X on the map and attack. The ghouls fight until destroyed.

## 30. STAIRS DOWN

It's obvious to any character standing at the top of this 20-foot-long staircase that the ghostly chants originate from somewhere below. Characters who descend the stairs and follow the hall beyond arrive in area 35.

## 31. DARKLORD'S SHRINE

This room is festooned with moldy skeletons that hang from rusty shackles against the walls. A wide alcove in the south wall contains a painted wooden statue carved in the likeness of a gaunt, pale-faced man wearing a voluminous black cloak, his pale left hand resting on the head of a wolf that stands next to him. In his right hand, he holds a smoky-gray crystal orb.

The room has exits in the west and north walls. Chanting can be heard coming from the west.

The statue depicts Strahd, to whom the cultists made sacrifices in the vain hope that he might reveal his darkest secrets to them. If the characters touch the statue or take the crystal orb from Strahd's hand, five **shadows** form around the statue and attack them. The shadows (the spirits of former cultists) pursue those who flee beyond the room's confines.

The skeletons on the wall are harmless decor.

### CONCEALED DOOR

Characters searching the room for secret doors find a concealed door in the middle of the east wall with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. It's basically an ordinary (albeit rotted) wooden door hidden under a layer of clay. The door pulls open to reveal a stone staircase that climbs 10 feet to a landing (area 32).



### TREASURE

The crystal orb is worth 25 gp. It can be used as an arcane focus but is not magical.

## 32. HIDDEN TRAPDOOR

The staircase ends at a landing with a 6-foot-high ceiling of close-fitting planks with a wooden trapdoor set into it. The trapdoor is bolted shut from this side and can be pushed open to reveal the den (area 3) above.

### DEVELOPMENT

Once the trapdoor has been found and opened, it remains available to characters as a way into and out of the dungeon level.

## 33. CULT LEADERS' DEN

The door in the southwest corner is a **mimic** in disguise. Any creature that touches the door becomes adhered to the creature, whereupon the mimic attacks. The mimic also attacks if its takes any damage.

A chandelier is suspended above a table in the middle of the room. Two high-backed chairs flank the table, which has an empty clay jug and two clay flagons atop it. Iron candlesticks stand in two corners, their candles long since melted away.

## 34. CULT LEADERS' QUARTERS

This room contains a large wood-framed bed with a rotted feather mattress, a wardrobe containing several old robes, a pair of iron candlesticks, and an open crate containing thirty torches and a leather sack with fifteen candles inside it. At the foot of the bed is an unlocked wooden footlocker containing some gear and magic items (see "Treasure" below).

Two **ghasts** (Gustav and Elisabeth Durst) are hidden in cavities behind the earthen walls, marked X on the map; they burst forth and attack if someone removes one or more items from the footlocker. The ghasts wear tattered black robes.

### TREASURE

Characters searching the footlocker find a folded *cloak of protection*, a small wooden coffer (unlocked) containing four *potions of healing*, a chain shirt, a mess kit, a flask of alchemist's fire, a bullseye lantern, a set of thieves' tools, and a spellbook with a yellow leather cover containing the following wizard spells:

1st level: *disguise self*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from evil and good*

2nd level: *darkvision*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *magic weapon*

These items were taken from adventurers who were drawn into Barovia, captured, and killed by the cult.

## 35. RELIQUARY

The ghostly chant emanating from area 38 fills this room. Characters can discern a dozen or so voices saying, over and over, "He is the Ancient. He is the Land."

The cult amassed several "relics" that it used in its rituals. These worthless items are stored in thirteen niches along the walls:

- A small, mummified, yellow hand with sharp claws (a goblin's hand) on a loop of rope
- A knife carved from a human bone
- A dagger with a rat's skull set into the pommel
- An 8-inch-diameter varnished orb made from a nothic's eye
- An aspergillum carved from bone
- A folded cloak made from stitched ghoulish skin
- A desiccated frog lashed to a stick (could be mistaken for a *wand of polymorph*)
- A bag full of bat guano
- A hag's severed finger
- A 6-inch-tall wooden figurine of a mummy, its arms crossed over its chest
- An iron pendant adorned with a devil's face
- The shrunken, shriveled head of a halfling
- A small wooden coffer containing a dire wolf's withered tongue

The southernmost tunnel slopes down at a 20-degree angle into murky water and ends at a rusty portcullis (area 37).

## 36. PRISON

The cultists shackled prisoners to the back walls of alcoves here. The prisoners are long gone (their bones litter the floor in area 27), but the rusty shackles remain.

### SECRET DOOR

A secret door in the south wall can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and pulls open to reveal area 38 beyond.

### TREASURE

Hanging on the back wall of the cell marked X on the map is a human skeleton clad in a tattered black robe. The skeleton belongs to a cult member who questioned the cult's blind devotion to Strahd. Characters who search the skeleton find a gold ring (worth 25 gp) on one of its bony fingers.

## 37. PORTCULLIS

This tunnel is blocked by a rusty iron portcullis that can be forcibly lifted with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. Otherwise, the portcullis can be raised or lowered by turning a wooden wheel half-embedded in the east wall of area 38. (The wheel is beyond the reach of someone east of the portcullis.) The floor around the portcullis is submerged under 2 feet of murky water.

## 38. RITUAL CHAMBER

The cult used to perform rituals in this sunken room. The chanting heard throughout the dungeon originates here, yet when the characters arrive, the dungeon falls silent as the chanting mysteriously stops.



The chanting stops as you peer into this forty-foot-square room. The smooth masonry walls provide excellent acoustics. Featureless stone pillars support the ceiling, and a breach in the west wall leads to a dark cave heaped with refuse. Murky water covers most of the floor. Stairs lead up to dry stone ledges that hug the walls. In the middle of the room, more stairs rise to form an octagonal dais that also rises above the water. Rusty chains with shackles dangle from the ceiling directly above a stone altar mounted on the dais. The altar is carved with hideous depictions of grasping ghouls and is stained with dry blood.

The water is 2 feet deep. The ledges and central dais are 5 feet high (3 feet higher than the water's surface), and the chamber's ceiling is 16 feet high (11 feet above the dais and ledges). The chains dangling from the ceiling are 8 feet long; the cultists would shackle prisoners to the chains, dangle them above the altar, cut them open with knives, and allow the altar to be bathed in blood.

Half embedded in the east wall is a wooden wheel connected to hidden chains and mechanisms. A character can use an action to turn the wheel, raising or lowering the nearby portcullis (see area 37).

The hole in the west wall leads to a naturally formed alcove. The half-submerged pile of refuse that fills it is a **shambling mound**, which the cultists dubbed Lorghoth the Decayer. It is asleep but awakens if attacked or if the characters summon the cultists but refuse to complete their ritual (see "One Must Die!" below). A character standing next to the mound can discern its true nature with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check.

### "ONE MUST DIE!"

If any character climbs to the top of the dais, read:

The chanting rises once more as thirteen dark apparitions appear on the ledges overlooking the room. Each one resembles a black-robed figure holding a torch, but the torch's fire is black and seems to draw light into it. Where you'd expect to see faces are voids.

"One must die!" they chant, over and over. "One must die! One must die!"

The apparitions are harmless figments that can't be damaged, turned, or dispelled.

Characters on the dais when the cultists appear must sacrifice a creature on the altar or face the cult's wrath; characters can ascertain what must be done with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) or Wisdom (Insight) check. To count as a sacrifice, a creature must die on the altar. The apparitions don't care what kind of creature is sacrificed, and they aren't fooled by illusions.

If the characters make the sacrifice, the cultists fade away, but their tireless chant of "He is the Ancient. He is the Land," echoes again in the dungeon. Strahd is aware

of the sacrifice, and Death House now does nothing to hinder the characters (see "Endings" below).

If the characters leave the dais without making the sacrifice, the cultists' chant changes: "Lorghoth the Decayer, we awaken thee!" This chant rouses the shambling mound and prompts it to attack. It pursues prey beyond the room but won't leave the dungeon. It can move through tunnels without squeezing and completely fills its space. At the start of the shambling mound's first turn, the chant changes again: "The end comes! Death, be praised!" If the shambling mound dies, the chanting stops and the apparitions vanish forever.

## ENDINGS

The mists of Ravenloft continue to surround Death House until the characters stand atop the dais and either appease or defy the cultists. Strahd is satisfied either way, prompting the mists to recede.

### THE CULT IS APPEASED

Death House harbors no ill will toward a party willing to sacrifice a life to appease the cult. Once the sacrifice is made, the characters are free to go. Upon emerging from the house, the characters advance to 3rd level.

### THE CULT IS DENIED

If the characters deny the cult its sacrifice and either destroy the shambling mound or escape from it, Death House attacks them as they try to leave. When they return upstairs, they must roll initiative as they discover several architectural changes:

- All the windows are bricked up; the bricked-up windows and the outer walls are impervious to the party's weapon attacks and damage-dealing spells.
- All the doors are gone, replaced by slashing scythe-blades. A character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to pass through a blade-trapped doorway unscathed. A character who spends 1 minute studying the blades in a particular doorway can try to take advantage of a momentary gap in their repeating movements and make a DC 15 Intelligence check instead. Failing either check, a character takes 2d10 slashing damage but manages to pass through the doorway. Any creature pushed through a doorway must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take the damage. The blades can't be disarmed.
- Every room that contains a fireplace, an oven, or a stove is filled with poisonous black smoke. The room is heavily obscured, and any creature that starts its turn in the smoke must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1d10 poison damage.
- The interior walls become rotted and brittle. Each 5-foot-section has AC 5 and 5 hit points, and can also be destroyed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Each 5-foot section of wall that's destroyed causes a **swarm of rats** to pour out and attack. The swarm won't leave the house.

Keep track of initiative as the characters make their way through the house. Once they escape, they advance to 3rd level, and the house does no more to harm them.





## Imagining the Ampersand

Nothing screams “Halloween” like a finely carved pumpkin, and you’ve no doubt already admired the spooky example adorning the cover of this issue of *Dragon+*.

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We mere mortals must learn to be content with carving crude eyes and teeth into our holiday squashes. But Ray Villafane—founder of Villafane Studios and creator of this issue’s cover—has raised pumpkin sculpting to a new level, producing carvings that are true works of art. *Dragon+* recently caught up with Ray to learn more about the making of this unusual objet d’art.



### How did you first discover your talent for creating pumpkin art?

I used to be an art teacher. One time, one of my students brought me a sixty-pound pumpkin and asked me to carve it. I'd never really enjoyed just carving triangles out of a pumpkin with kitchen knives, so to make it more exciting and challenging, I used clay-carving tools. Turns out they work really well, and I was hooked.

## Rules of the Game

Ray's inspiration for this issue's cover art was a game played by hill giants that they call “**Stuff-Stuff**.” A group of giants round up a quantity of halflings, then try to cram as many as possible into their mouths at one time. Because hill giants are not renowned for their way with numbers, they often determine the winner by simply yelling “All” when the current supply of halflings has been exhausted. Failure in the competition results in the crowd hollering “Bad!” and then beating the unfortunate contestant with sticks.

(It's not, we must admit, the most sophisticated game in the Forgotten Realms. But then, hill giants aren't exactly the most sophisticated of creatures.)





### What was the story behind the giant-and-halflings sculpture that adorns the cover of the Halloween issue of Dragon+?

What artist wouldn't like to sculpt giants? They're often big ugly creatures, and things like that can be really fun to sculpt. After looking through the art brief, I learned that these giants often ate halflings, then used their shields and bones to decorate their bodies in a game called "Stuff-Stuff." That seemed like a really cool direction to go in.

Well, the first thing I did was pick the biggest and heaviest pumpkin that was available! It's important for a pumpkin to be heavy, because its size indicates a thick wall to work with. If the wall's not thick, it can break easily, and it also doesn't allow for full depth in the sculpture.



Next, I gathered reference materials for inspiration. Using ribbon loop tools, commonly used for clay and pottery, I began to block out the bigger forms. The deepest part of any face are the tear ducts at the corners of the eyes, while the tip of the nose is the most prominent. I wanted to utilize all that space, so I started with the tear ducts and carved to a point just before I would have broken through the wall.



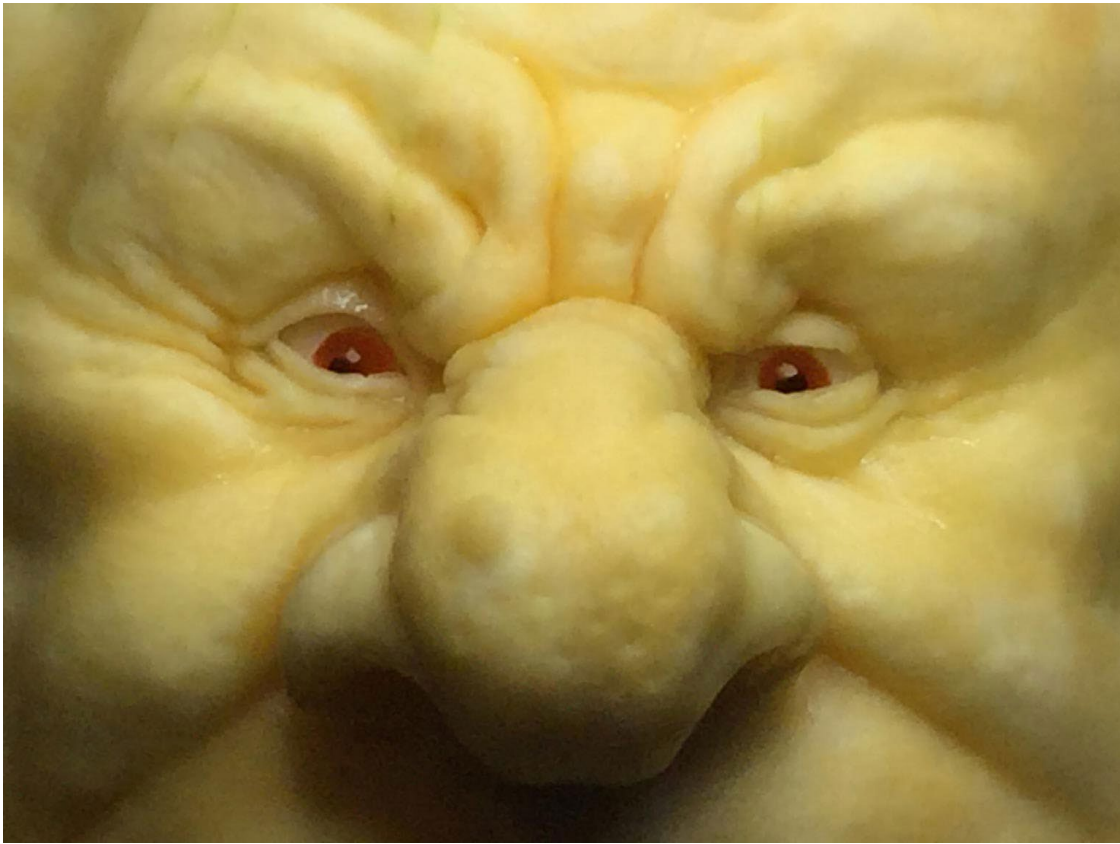
The next step was to scrape away the nose. Once the face was laid out, it was then just a slow process of not so much carving as shaving my way through. Every single piece that comes off is so thin that you can see right through it. I then smoothed and polished certain areas with scrubbing pads, and layered the skin texture using a small loop tool for the finished look.





### How were the halflings made?

The halflings were carved out of sweet potatoes, which I chose because of the contrast in color. One of my talented sculptors, Chris Vierra, did the halflings and their arms, and then we added pumpkin guts to make it look like human insides, plus fibers from a palm tree for hair. Then I took a small pumpkin and carved the Dungeons & Dragons ampersand in a traditional way, for a nice contrast and a Halloween-type feel.



How do you visualize each piece? Do you make a plan or a set of sketches before you start carving, or do you feel your way as you go along?

I approach each carving differently. Sometimes I use reference material, which can be important to establish a visual vocabulary. But it's also fun to just play and make stuff up. Kind of like doodling.





Your work features a lot of monsters, from zombies to scarecrows to giants. Do you especially enjoy darker subject matter?

I suppose someone looking at my art might perceive that I'm drawn to the darker side. But if left to my own devices, it would probably be more humorous in nature. Because I carve pumpkins for Halloween, the subject matter tends to revolve around monsters.



Do you think anyone could try this kind of carving? How would they get started?

Anyone can certainly try it, and even the most seasoned expert had to start somewhere. The most important thing is to have fun and relax. Like anything else, it's a learning process. You can watch one of my tutorials on YouTube or at Villafane Studios for some tips.





It's not only the carving but the photography and lighting that really brings this art to life. How do you approach that?

Pumpkins rot, so it's important to photograph one well. It's the only way to really preserve the piece. Lighting is really important, because pumpkin material is translucent to a certain degree, and if you don't have nice overhead lighting that casts the proper shadows, many of the details of a carving can be lost.



What's been your most unusual, ambitious, or perhaps even your favorite carving project?

I would say probably the sand sculpture of Dante's Inferno in Italy, because of its scale. It was only my second sand sculpture, and it was an eighty-ton, seventeen-foot-tall work done in ten days! It was something that had to be visually appealing but also structurally sound and engineered properly, so that it didn't collapse under its own weight.





### Where can fans see your work live this fall?

We have a lot of scarecrows on display this year, from newborns, to mama and papa scarecrows, to a monster scarecrow. These can be seen at the New York Botanical Gardens; at the Enchanted Pumpkin Garden in Carefree, Arizona; and at the Mall of America in Minnesota. I'm sitting here answering these questions after a fun day of carving in Berlin. I'm just back after sculpting at the Ludwigsburg Palace.





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## Betrayal at Dungeon in the Hill

With the Halloween season upon us—and with several D&D brand members and personas involved in its new expansion—how could we not venture inside the haunted halls of *Betrayal at House on the Hill*?

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In addition to D&D, this issue of Dragon+ sees us also exploring fellow brands within the Wizards of the Coast family—specifically, an in-depth look at the new Widow’s Walk expansion for the classic Avalon Hill game Betrayal at House on the Hill .

To start things off, Shelly Mazzanoble from Avalon Hill first offers her introduction to the expansion (and talks about her own introduction to Avalon Hill):

You know I love Dungeons & Dragons.

I never split the party.

I revere every character I ever played. (RIP Kevin the Barbarian and your six minutes of pure, barbaric bravery!)

I wrote the book on D&D. Actually, two books.

“You’re going to focus on Avalon Hill,” my boss said.

“It’s a great opportunity!” my boss’s boss said.

What the what? How could they do this to me? I didn’t want to move! Tiamat was rising! Zugtmoy was about to get married! We were going to Barovia! I wanted to— OMG LET’S MAKE AN EXPANSION FOR BETRAYAL AT HOUSE ON THE HILL!

I love Betrayal at House on the Hill for many of the same reasons I love D&D. The cooperative nature. The sense of exploration. Eight-year-old girls wielding sticks of dynamite and acupuncture needles. And then there’s the anticipation that something very, very bad is going to happen. Will we be prepared? Will we survive? Will I be the traitor? (The wannabee architect in me also couldn’t get over the fact that there was no bathroom in the house on the hill. Talk about a frightening experience!)



Betrayal at House on the Hill has been a mainstay on the top-horror-board-games list for years. I know I’m not the first person to wish for an expansion. But I was finally in a position to make that happen. Or at least to convince people that it needed to happen. Thus, a star was born. Or, rather, a widow. Her name is Magdalena, and she’s fabulous.

Widow’s Walk brings a ton of original content to the table: new items, omens, events, monsters, rooms, mechanics, and fifty new haunts written by some of the greatest (and, it turns out, terrifying) minds of the gaming and entertainment world. Fifty





new haunts! (There are fifty in the base game as a point of comparison.)

We partnered with Lone Shark Games (also huge fans of the original Betrayal at House on the Hill) on the design. And really, Mike Selinker best sums up the experience: “Widow’s Walk is a love letter from the fans of Betrayal, to the fans of Betrayal.”

It was a lot of fun making this expansion, and we hope the fans have just as much fun playing it. And yes—the house on the hill has a bathroom now.

You can also hear Shelly on the official D&D podcast, Dragon Talk . More posts from Shelly and many of the other all-star contributors to Widow’s Walk can be found at the official Avalon Hill Facebook page (just look in its notes ).

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In addition to hearing Shelly’s thoughts, we also wanted to reach out to a few of those contributors directly about their experiences of the game, the new expansion, and this haunted Halloween season.

**What’s the scariest thing that ever happened to you?**

**Jerry Holkins:** One time when I was at the store, the clerk accidentally charged me \$400 for a gallon of milk, which put my account into overdraft right before the rent was due.

**Andy Collins:** This doesn’t rate on the “scariest” scale, but I will note that no matter how many hours I spent in the basement of my childhood home (playing with action figures as a little kid, gaming as a teenager, shooting pool with my buddies), I never quite felt comfortable going down there alone at night. There’s just some

difference between “kinda dark” and “absolutely pitch black” that raises the hackles on my neck.

**Keith Baker:** A bad dream triggered a panic attack. I was caught in the nightmare, unable to breathe, and then I woke up because the attack was actually happening. I’d never had a panic attack before, so there I was caught in a moment between nightmare and reality, gasping for breath, uncertain of what was happening.

**Have you ever seen a ghost? What happened?**

**Jerry Holkins:** I don’t believe in the general consensus surrounding reality. In my conception, we are all ghosts, who die and become real. So, yes: I see ghosts constantly.

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** I’ve always lived with one or more cats. They seem to see things I don’t. Maybe they’re seeing ghosts. I have addressed the seemingly empty air that the cat is focused on and told it directly, in my most serious and severe manner: “If you’re a ghost or spirit, this is my place and you don’t belong here. You want to leave.”

**Keith Baker:** Naturally, I panicked. I dropped the sandwich I was holding and ran as fast as I could. The ghost chased me, but slipped on the sandwich and got tangled up in a curtain. It turned out it was actually the creepy old guy who ran the amusement park the whole time!

**Have you ever been inside a haunted house or room? What happened?**

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** Perhaps. Many years ago, I bought an old Victorian house, built in the late 1890s. The previous owner and his lover did an extensive remodeling and restoration, putting lush wool carpets in every room to suit the ornate woodwork. Every room had this soft, dusky floral pattern, except for the master bedroom when we bought the house. The owner had been killed there. A crime of passion. And the replacement carpet was noticeably a generic beige. A good friend of mine, Dara, said that she felt an evil, dark presence in the house from the first time she visited it. She would come over to game, but rarely stayed long. Finally, about a year after I moved in, she said that the presence was gone, at peace.

**If you could carry three items into a haunted house with you, what**



would they be?

**Jerry Holkins:** Under those circumstances, only one object is truly required: a House Un-Haunt-Ener. If you've got one of those, you're basically good.

**Andy Collins:** 1) An X-Files-style super-bright flashlight, 2) an air horn for getting the attention of my friends exploring with me, and 3) a hand-held propane torch, so I can make the credible threat, "Okay, ghosts, knock it off or I'm going to take a flame thrower to this place!"

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** 1) A Sharpie (for keeping track of where I've gone, making notes, and such), 2) a big German shepherd or English mastiff, and 3) The Necronomicon (of course!).

**Keith Baker:** My smartphone, because even if there's no signal to call for an Uber to get the heck out of there, it's still a clock, a camera, and a flashlight, and there's some games I can play.

Chocolate, because it's important to keep your spirits up in a haunted house.

A copy of Gloom, because if I DID run into a ghost, I think they might enjoy it.

What's your go-to scary movie?

**Jerry Holkins:** House of 1000 Corpses and the bizarre sorta-sequel The Devil's Rejects. If we're going a little farther afield, I would say Aliens, which I think represents all human genres equally.

**Keith Baker:** Tough call. I love Cabin in the Woods, but I consider it to be more of a comedy than a truly scary movie. When I was younger I loved Ghost Story (with Fred Astaire), but I'm not sure if it holds up. Possibly Poltergeist, which I blame for my phobic reaction to maggots.

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** 28 Days Later.

**Andy Collins:** I get creeped out by "real" scary movies, so I prefer ones that focus on action or comedy. Thus, I pick The Cabin in the Woods.

So if you were a technician from that film, what monster/killer

would you have bet on?

**Andy Collins:** The dismemberment goblins. No one else put money on them, so I wouldn't have to split the winnings. Plus, I just like the word "dismemberment."

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** The creepy ballerina.

**Keith Baker:** I like the Sugarplum Fairy and the Twins, but I always bet on Kevin.

Moving on to your experiences with Betrayal at House on the Hill, tell us about the first time you played the game.

**Jerry Holkins:** I owned it for a super long time without playing it. There were a lot—and I mean, A LOT—of single use chits in there. Then I started seeing copies of the game going on eBay for north of a hundred dollars, and I thought, "Hmm. Maybe I should get a few friends over to help me punch out all those chits."

**Andy Collins/Gwendolyn Kestrel:** The first time we played the game was in a playtest at Wizards of the Coast prior to its initial release. We both knew right away that this was something cool, and different from other board games we'd played before.

**Chris Dupuis:** I played the first edition back in 2005 with my brother Bryan and our local game group. We first encountered the werewolf haunt, and it was super fun. We immediately wanted to play again to see what our next haunt would be. That's when I knew this game was special. No two games are ever the same. Even if you trigger a haunt you've played before, the items and events you've encountered have changed the odds for both sides.

**Keith Baker:** I ended up being the traitor in the shrunk-heroes-chased-by-giant-cat scenario, and deputized my actual cat to help me catch those wretched investigators.

What's your Betrayal strategy?

**Jerry Holkins:** I'm more on the story side of Betrayal players, I bet. I really like to watch the whole thing melt down. I'm there for the light RP, the big twist, and obviously the gruesome conclusion.

**Andy Collins:** Collect as many items as I can and keep them, because I can't trust anyone else in the group.



**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** Explore as much as possible. I love seeing the new layouts and floors and learning where everything is.

**Chris Dupuis:** Immediately split the party. Spread out and get as much equipment as possible. While we're working together, we're really not, you know? You want to make sure you're equipped and ready in case you're the traitor. If you're not the traitor, you want to make sure you have the tools to take the traitor down and help the team.

**Keith Baker:** What I love about Betrayal is the blend between story and game. So whoever I play, I love to actually roleplay the character and drive my decisions on how the story unfolds rather than the purely tactical approach. I tend towards Brandon or Zoe, because ACTION KID!

Can you tell us about your scenario in Widow's Walk (without giving too much away of course)? What was the inspiration behind its design?

**Jerry Holkins:** In Twins, I really wanted to bend the expected rules around what would happen when the haunt starts in a fundamental way. The version that shipped is actually a little tamer than my original conception, which would have required a third haunt book and might not even be possible in our universe.

**Gwendolyn Kestrel:** The inspiration for House of Leavings was Mark Z. Danielewski's House of Leaves. I read it when it was first published, and it made a strong impact on me. I love the creepy feel of doom that builds amid the multiple references, footnotes, and layers of the narrative. (I recommend the book—but read it in a paper copy! This is a marvel of typography and layout, and the electronic versions lose too much.)

**Keith Baker:** My scenario (Man's Worst Enemy) was inspired by my adorable dog, Sensei Ping... and perhaps a touch of the classic Twilight Zone episode "It's a Good Life."

**Chris Dupuis:** I was proud to design three haunts for Widow's Walk. Two of them, I've talked about on our Widow's Talk blog: Shush and The Gathering Storm. My third haunt is called Back to the Past, and was inspired in part by Back to the Future Part II, which is one of my favorite films. The idea is that you've seen this horrible future (a

haunted house with over a hundred ways to kill you), and you have to solve a mystery in the past to keep that future from becoming reality. This notion is really compelling to me, and it adds a whole new level of tension to the task at hand. Plus, as I was designing my haunts, I often wondered what sort of deadly event actually triggered the initial haunt within the house. I think the intro text from the Secrets of Survival book gives you a good grasp on the story you're thrown into.

This haunt is triggered by the Photograph omen. From there, it's a race against time to find where the traitor is hiding. It's a bit of a cat-and-mouse game, and I think it's fun for both sides. The survivors need to find the traitor, while the traitor is throwing them off the scent, waiting for their ritual to complete.

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Finally, we would be remiss not to bring things back to Dungeons & Dragons. We asked our contributors how they might consider making use of Betrayal at House on the Hill, Widow's Walk, and their components and scenarios as part of their D&D games. I, for one, am an ardent supporter of Calvinball-esque kit-bashing !

*Are there ways you might suggest incorporating Betrayal at House on the Hill into a D&D campaign? For example, using the map tiles to explore a haunted location, incorporating rules or themes from your haunt or elsewhere, or inspiring DMs looking to run special Halloween-themed adventures?*

**Jerry Holkins:** Oh, lots. I would have the house itself be the enemy they need to escape from; they've already been consumed. The tiles would be a great system for that.

**Andy Collins:** I love the idea of using Betrayal as a one-shot session for an existing group of characters. I'd make sure that death was unlikely; this should be more about scary fun than actual terror. Seeing your buddy turn against you and try to eat your face sounds like a great RPG session to me. Don't worry too much about rules accuracy. As long as you deliver the spirit, you'll have fun.

**Peter Adkison:** The idea is fairly straightforward, but I would be tempted to use the mansion in a horror-themed setting like Ravenloft, and to think of the place as a DM might think of a dungeon. It's out in the wilderness somewhere, and sometimes parties of adventurers



go into the mansion looking for loot and experience.

The trick is that every time you go into the mansion, the haunt changes to one of the haunts in the game. I think the interesting benefit is that players aren't able to retreat and refresh wounds and spells, because if they do so, the setting will reset. As I'm sure you know, applying this sort of pressure to a group can be difficult. The age-old problem is adventurers retreating to refresh, and this provides a built-in artifice to keep up the pressure. Players might hole up in a room for rejuvenation, but that comes with risks.

For a campaign, there would be some way to more permanently rid the mansion of all the haunts, but the secret to doing this would require repeated visits to gather up the hints required to do so.

**Keith Baker:** The Traitor's Tome is a trove of story ideas waiting to be pillaged. If you're quick on your feet when it comes to adapting mechanics to story, it's an easy way to throw together a story on short notice. Obviously Betrayal is set in modern day, but most stories can be easily adapted to other eras. Ghost Bride (haunt 20)? This works just as well in a castle as it does in a modern mansion. Frankenstein's Legacy (haunt 29)? A great scenario for a flesh golem.

The real decision is whether to actually have a PC turn traitor—which can be awkward in a long-term roleplaying campaign—or simply to use the idea of the haunt, but to have the traitor be an NPC (though preferably someone the PCs care about!). In the cases of a scenario such as Ghost Bride, freeing the enthralled PC traitor can be one of the most important aspects of the story... and the player whose PC has turned traitor can temporarily take on a new role, perhaps that of the exorcist who knows what's going on and has the specialized skills to lay the ghost to rest.

**Bart Carroll:** Finally, adding my own note here as well. My contribution to Widow's Walk—He Who Must Not be Read—was very much influenced by the folktale of Koschei the Deathless. While the haunt technically involves a necromancer, I imagine the mechanics would work quite well for a lich looking to hide a phylactery in a series of mobile, nested containers—each of which must be tracked down and defeated in turn.

We hope you've enjoyed this very seasonal look inside Avalon Hill's famed haunted house! Look for Betrayal at House on the Hill and its expansion, Widow's Walk , online and at your friendly local gaming store! For more information, visit the Avalon Hill website .

As also mentioned in our Deadstone Cleft feature , we previously showcased Curse of Strahd in issue 6 of Dragon+. For anyone inspired to run a haunted house, we'd recommend Curse of Strahd's free preview adventure, Death House. As an added feature, we'd also like to offer the Death House map (both tagged and untagged) for your use.

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## The Contributors

Peter Adkison founded the companies Wizards of the Coast and Hidden City Games. He is the owner of Gen Con LLC, and the filmmaker behind The Devil Walks in Salem.

Keith Baker is a novelist and founder of Twogether Studios. His game designs include Gloom, the Eberron campaign setting for Dungeons & Dragons, Cthulhu Fluxx, and Phoenix: Dawn Command.

Andy Collins works as a game designer and lead writer for Undead Labs, where he makes up stories about a world overrun by zombies. He was a designer on Dungeons & Dragons fourth edition and the Marvel Heroes MMO.

Chris Dupuis is a designer on Dungeons & Dragons, and has developed games such as Dungeon Command, Risk Legacy, Heroscape, and Lords of Waterdeep. You can find him on twitter as @gameguruchris.

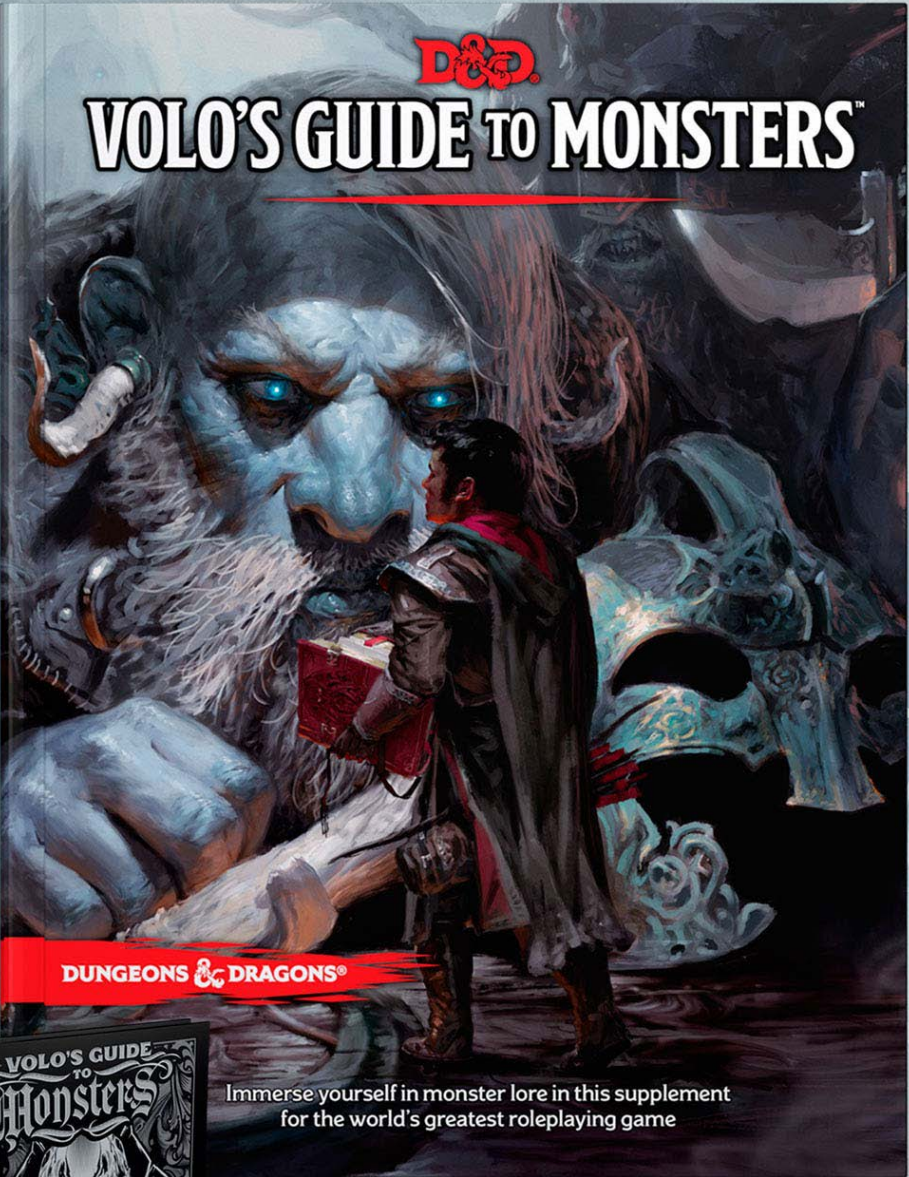
By day, Gwendolyn Kestrel works in the realm of online marketing; by night, she's an avid gamer. She was a haunt designer for the original Betrayal at House on the Hill and a designer and developer for Dungeons & Dragons.

Jerry "Tycho" Holkins is one half of the duo that creates the Penny Arcade comic.



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# RESEARCH HAS NEVER BEEN SO **DANGEROUS**



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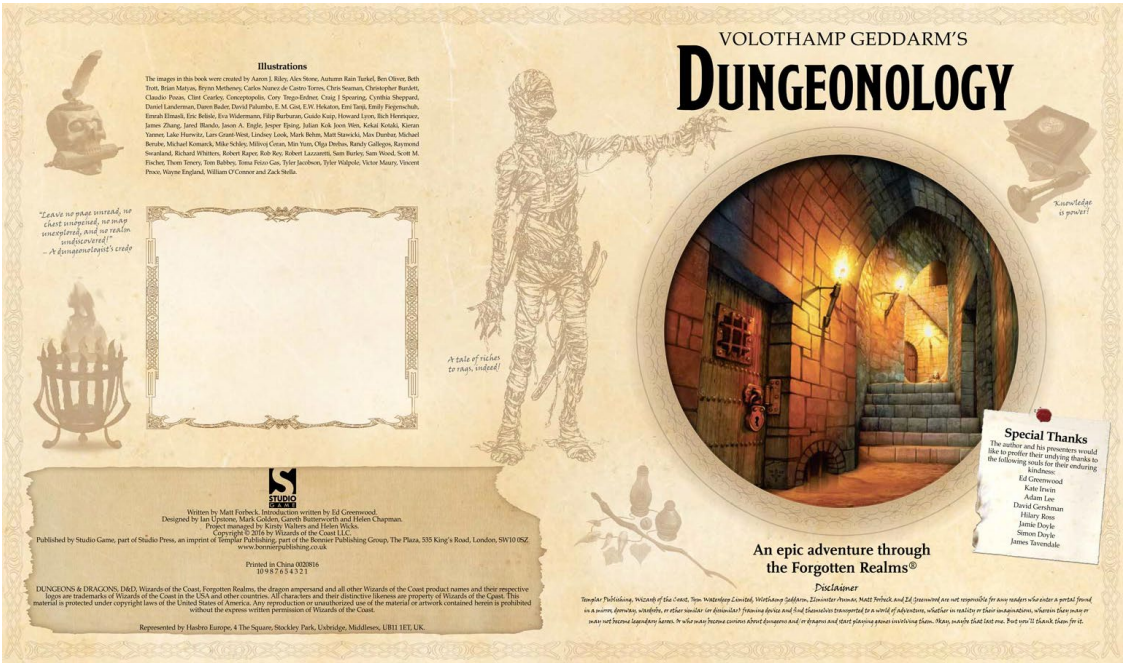


## Delving into Dungeology

Join the valiant Volo for this essential guide to the Forgotten Realms.

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*“It’s the perfect gift to give to someone who’s D&D-curious,” says author Matt Forbeck when asked to describe Dungeology in a nutshell. This new book takes the lore and history of the Forgotten Realms and reinterprets it through the lens of the “Ologies”—the successful literary series from King’s Road Publishing, in which books masquerade as rediscovered texts and forgotten notebooks to bring fantasy worlds to life. Written in the voice of intrepid Forgotten Realms travel writer Volothamp Geddarm, Dungeology is a perfect D&D primer. Dragon+ caught up with author Matt Forbeck and D&D story wizard Adam Lee to learn how this tome was put together.*



(Select to view)

Dungeonology is a great introduction to the world of Faerûn. Would you say the book is aimed firmly at new fans?

**Matt Forbeck:** It's definitely aimed at new fans—or, as I like to think of them, D&D fans-to-be. Though hard core gamers will be able to enjoy the book too, it's not meant as a gaming supplement so much as a broad overview of what makes D&D so much fun.

**Adam Lee:** At the end of reading *Dungeonology*, I want kids to ask their parents, “Hey, can we play a game of D&D?” I want this book to inspire young minds to launch into the infinite adventures that Dungeons & Dragons has to offer. I’m a huge believer in the power of D&D to create creators; it’s like a stellar nursery fueling the great storytellers of the future. D&D activates the imagination in a way that nothing else does, and it’s no wonder that so many creative people acknowledge the game as one of the fundamental influences on their art.

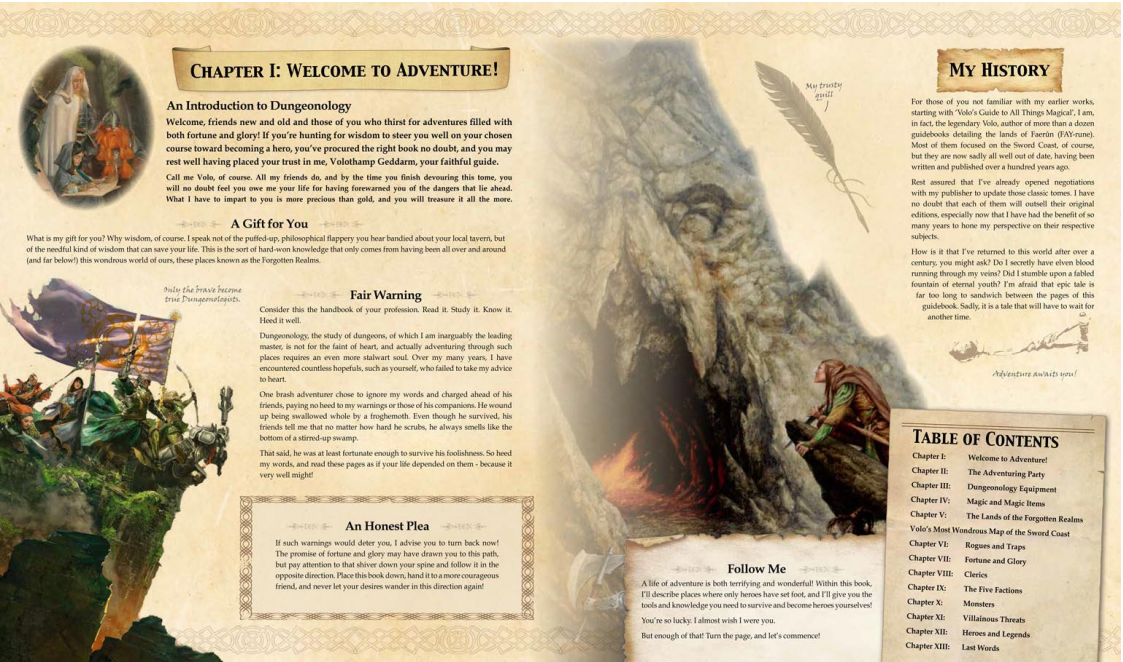
How deep did you have to delve into the lore and history of the Forgotten Realms before setting out to write *Dungeonology*?

**MF:** In one sense, not that far; and in another sense, years deep. I started playing D&D back in 1983, and I’ve edited and written a number of D&D books over the years, starting back in the early ’90s. I wrote parts of *Races of Faerûn* and *Unapproachable East* a decade or so ago, but I still had to brush up on everything that’s happened in the Realms in more recent times. That came in the form of books like



*Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*, but also from inside information containing secrets and tidbits that hadn't quite been made public yet.

**AL:** We didn't want to turn *Dungeology* into a master class on the Forgotten Realms. We wanted to make sure there was enough information in the book to delight a lore geek's fact-loving brain, but not to cram in so much content that it would turn into an academic text. Hopefully, some readers will take the epic plunge and devour the wealth of lore that's out there. There are many nights of reading by candlelight awaiting those who answer that call.



(Select to view)

Ed Greenwood provides the introduction to the book. What was it like working with the man who first forged the Forgotten Realms?

**MF:** Fantastic. I've known Ed for many years, but I don't think we've actually had the chance to work on a project together, so that was a real treat. Plus, he wrote it in the voice of Elminster, which fit the book like a custom suit of armor.

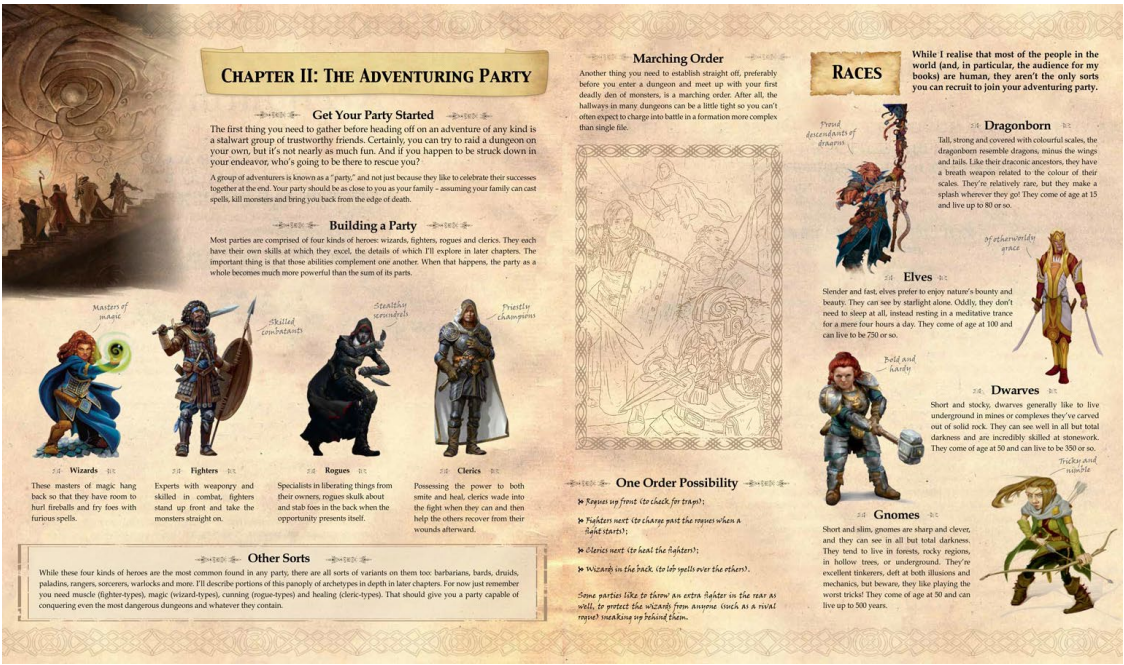
**AL:** Ed is a dream to collaborate with. When we send off an inquiry, he's like a reporter who's embedded in the Forgotten Realms, giving us a play-by-play of what he sees. On top of that, he's a really nice guy.

Volo is always an interesting and amusing narrator. What was it like working in his voice?

**MF:** Tremendous fun. Volo is both smart and clueless. He knows all

sorts of details about the Forgotten Realms, but he often doesn't recognize danger when he sees it. You have to be a little daft to basically be a tour guide who promotes engaging in dangerous quests like they're fantastically fun holidays, but that's Volo all the way. He's not speaking to the characters but to the players, who are often just as cavalier about maintaining a sense of personal safety when it comes to the heroes they play.

**AL:** When I hear Volo in my mind, he's this lovable adventuring scallywag and a teller of awfully tall tales. For some reason, a combination of Rick Steves and David Attenborough got stuck in my head—specifically, the intensity with which they both tackle life and exploration. Volo is still wrapped in childlike wonder, and he has a desire to be loved by all. He makes friends all over the world with his outrageous tales of adventure, so who can blame him for pushing the boundaries of truth a little... or, okay, a lot?



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There's plenty of humor in *Dungeology*. Was that a conscious decision made to balance some of the darker content?

**MF:** Part of that just comes from writing in Volo's voice—but yes, it was a conscious means of lightening some of the more serious bits for an intended audience that skews a little younger than your typical D&D group. The other part of it is just my own natural tendency to make jokes as I go. I've written lots of books over the years, and I often get comments on the humor in them, even when they're set in a



fairly serious universe like Halo.

**AL:** Totally. Humor is one of the foundations of D&D, and we wanted to make sure that anyone new to the game understands that it encompasses both the sublime and the absurd. Anyone who has played can tell you that D&D can slide from serious to redonkulous in a heartbeat. At its heart, the game is a storytelling medium, so it needs to deliver all the goods. And for us as stewards, humor is high on that list.

**What was your favorite part of working on *Dungeology*? What was the most difficult part of bringing the book to life?**

**MF:** I had a ball working with the teams at both Wizards and at King's Road Publishing. Everyone had so much enthusiasm for the book, and people were constantly coming up with amazing new ways to make it better and better. The hardest part was when we were trying to figure out how to present what we had. We couldn't cover everything—not by a long shot. I had to cull all that material down to its essence.

**AL:** Probably the hardest thing was keeping the book succinct, engaging, and fun. Ask anyone to “explain D&D,” and they'll probably bounce around, telling you about rolling up a character, adventuring in strange lands, forming a party with friends—a whole tidal wave of fantasy babble. D&D is this infinite landscape of cats, and in creating *Dungeology*, we had to figure out a way to herd all those cats into a book that made some kind of sense.



(Select to view)

How did you decide what to include and what to leave out in this essential guide?

**MF:** My first criteria was always, “What’s going to be the most fun?” After that, I tried my best to stick to the basics. I couldn’t cover every possible character class, and I also concentrated on the Sword Coast rather than trying to detail every bit about the Realms. The book is ostensibly for novice adventurers about to strike out for the first time, so that seemed to fit best.

**AL:** For the monsters, I wanted to make sure we hit all the D&D superstars—beholders, liches, displacer beasts, mimics, gelatinous cubes—but I had to make cuts at some point. However, I knew that *Volo's Guide to Monsters* would be coming out hot on *Dungeonology's* heels, so fans would get to feast on a full three-course D&D monster meal soon enough.

Choosing characters was a toughie. Iconic characters like Elminster and Drizzt were no-brainers, but I wanted to get in some newcomers like Calliope and Ezmerelda d'Avenir as well. These are characters who we feel are strong, fun, interesting heroes, and we're excited about showing everyone our diverse upcoming cast.

What do you wish you had time to include in this volume of *Dungeonology*? What sorts of things would you like to include in a sequel?



**MF:** It wasn't an issue of time so much as space, and I would have loved to be able to delve deeper into all sorts of topics. I could have written an entire book on Baldur's Gate, Icewind Dale, or the Underdark alone. *Underdarkology*? Does that work as a title?

**AL:** Maps, maps, and more maps. I would have loved to include a sample dungeon with descriptions of rooms and treasures. "What you find in a dragon's hoard," or "Strange potions and their effects," or "A witch's creepy spellbook." If we did a sequel, I'd be interested in illuminating the planes, and doing a deeper dive into our heroes and villains. It would even be fun to do a book on the art and craft of being a DM.

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## DUNGEONOLOGY: THE PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE

*To create Dungeonology, our intrepid creative folks teamed up with King's Road Publishing, who have been publishing the Ologies series for over a decade. That hugely successful and highly popular line, includes such titles as Dragonology Wizardology, and Pirateology, all of which have delighted a generation of readers through their use of lavish illustrations, innovative maps, unique pullouts, and minibooks within the books. King's Road creative director Helen Wicks, sales director (and D&D superfan) James Tavendale, and editor Kirsty Walters give Dragon+ a publisher's perspective on how the Forgotten Realms provided some of the series' most intriguing subject matter.*

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The Ologies are such a renowned series. What qualities have made the books so successful?

At the time of publication, the Ologies were hailed as a publishing phenomenon. Thirteen years on, they have yet to be equaled as a body of work. Their innovative format broke boundaries in terms of design and exceptional production values. The books are created to feel like rediscovered notebooks—long-lost journals from past times that offer glimpses of different worlds, breathing life into a huge range of new subjects. They are visually exciting to navigate, packed with novelties, incredible illustrations, and text that all blend together to inform readers in a truly unique way.

## How did the idea for *Dungeonology* first come about?

King's Road Publishing regularly runs its own D&D sessions, thanks to the dedication of a few hard core employee fans. We love the creative scope the game offers, and the opportunity it creates to weave stories. It's what our creative teams do best. The marriage of the two lines seemed, in many ways, an obvious one. We wanted to celebrate the visual beauty and incredible depth of this amazing world by pulling the reader deep within it.





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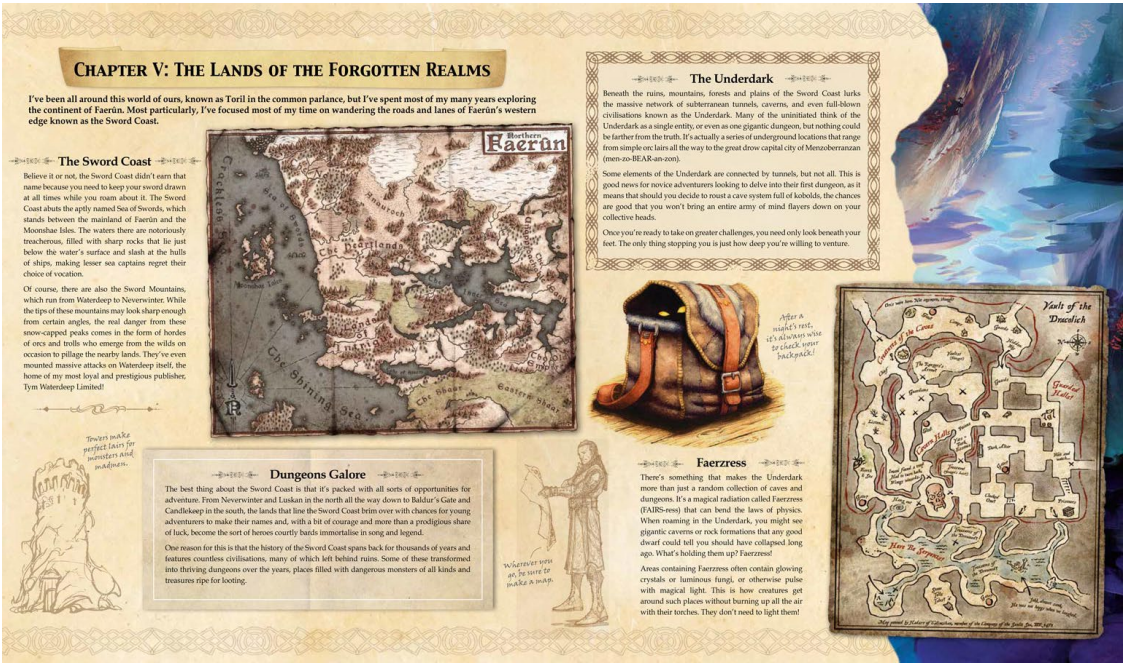
How would you describe *Dungeonology* for readers who aren't yet acquainted with it?

The Ologies were created as books for explorers, using fictional conceits to bring myths, history, and legends to life. In this way, *Dungeonology* offers an authentic, in-world experience that guides readers through the Forgotten Realms, while preparing them for what they might find en route.

The book explains the basics of how to build an adventuring party and identify the magic, monsters, villains, and heroes you might meet while journeying. It's packed with handy tips, funny stories, incredible artwork, and a host of extras—including a spell booklet, a dragon identifier, a map, and a miniature *Volo's Guide*.

What makes *Dungeons & Dragons* such a good fit for the Ologies series?

The sheer depth and breadth of the existing D&D world made it the perfect match for the Ology format. There was so much to draw on. The richness of the source material provided by Wizards of the Coast, coupled with the palpable enthusiasm from everyone involved, ensured that the resulting product is simply bursting with in-world knowledge, funny and exciting background stories, and authentic illustrative material.



How was it working in such a lore-rich, well-established world? Was it a very different task to the other Ologies books?

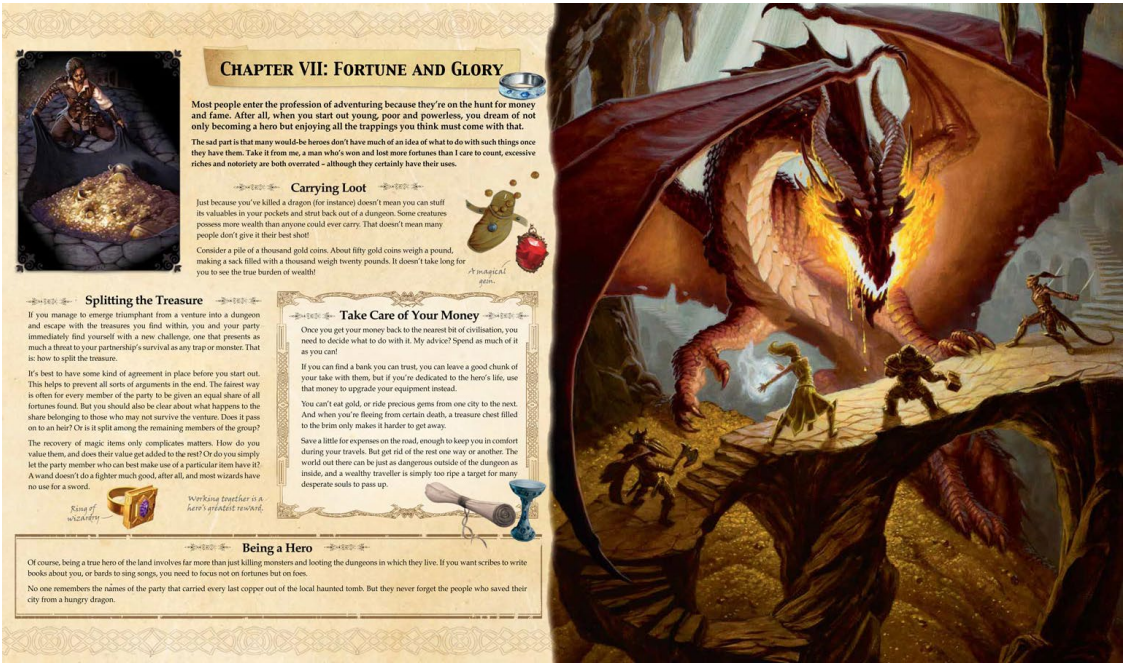
It was a very different experience, and one that came with its own challenges! This is the first time that the Ologies have turned their gaze upon a universe that exists beyond the scope of the book. We had a whole world to learn about and mine for information, but all in a very short space of time, which was incredibly daunting. However, we had our amazing guides at WotC, who made the experience a real delight. Our relationship with them was intensely collaborative, and the success of the collaboration made the book great fun to work on.

We were also lucky to be able to engage two great voices early in the creative process. Author Matt Forbeck was a joy to work alongside. His knowledge and passion was invaluable, and made the job of working inside an existing universe much easier than we'd first expected. And once we had been introduced to Ed Greenwood—Elminster himself—the book seemed to unfold as if by magic.

You've chosen an interesting format for the work, in that it's not just a standard book. Tell us a little about its secrets and why you decided on this kind of presentation?

The beauty of the established Ology format is that it reveals as you read. The flaps fold back to reveal new heroes, while the minibooklets sprinkle in extra spells and dragon lore. This exciting world deserved to be displayed in a fitting format!





*Dungeonology* features some beautiful art and illustrations. What was the thinking behind its graphic design and overall look?

It was a complicated balancing act, truth be told. WotC provided us with a rich archive of beautiful color images, but a key aspect of the Ology series design involved mixing this color with sepia tones. This gives the book the authentic feel of a just-discovered tome.

Thankfully, we had commissioned many images to be redrawn in line for our amazing coloring book, *Monsters and Heroes of the Realms*. We were also able to carry over other recognizable design aspects of the Ology series, such as the border patterns, decorative graphics, annotations, and labels, thanks to the flexibility of everyone involved.

The *Dungeonology* world map really caught our eye. Who was the artist and how was it created?

If there's one thing we know about D&D fans, it's that they love a map! We made a point of including maps throughout the book wherever possible, but we wanted something to bring a "wow" factor to the experience. When WotC showed us the map of the Sword Coast, drawn by Mike Schley, we knew it was perfect. With the help of their experts, we augmented the information on the map to include sneak previews into the fall 2016 storyline, and added some paper-engineered magic!







## Dressing the Dungeon Master

Chris Perkins's costume wowed fans at PAX West 2016, but how was it made?

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*Among the many delights of this year's Acquisitions Incorporated session at PAX West was Dungeon Master extraordinaire Chris Perkins and his showstopper of a gold dragon costume, which drew wild applause when he stepped out on stage. (See “[Video & Audio Highlights](#)” in this issue for the full reveal.)*

*But have you ever wondered how such an elaborate, intricate, and detailed costume was actually made? Well, Meris Mullaley and Amanda Sharpe—costume designer and mask maker, respectively—reveal the secrets of their beautiful design.*

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**How did you first get into costume design?**

**Meris Mullaley:** My parents raised me on the classics from my very earliest memories— *Lord of the Rings* before bedtime, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *A Wrinkle in Time*. They had an appreciation for fantasy and science fiction, and the ways those genres could explore humanity. My first self-

made costume was a college Halloween costume. I was an archaeology major, and I really wanted to dress as an Egyptian deity. I designed my costume and asked my mom for help, and she showed me how to modify a sewing pattern to create the dress I wanted. It became one of my greatest sources of pride. Little did I know what doors I was opening.



(Select to view)

**Amanda Sharpe:** I've been an artist ever since I could hold a pencil; I love to draw, paint, sculpt, and create. I started making masks out of leather a few years ago, mostly just to see if I could. I knew it was a material other people had worked with before, so I looked up a tutorial and made a **Mask of Avacyn**, from **Magic: The Gathering**. My dad is a leatherworker himself, making **custom clogs that he sells online**, so I've always been familiar with the material. But instead of making shoes, I decided to make fantasy creatures!

**Are you a big D&D fan? Tell us a little about your adventures.**

**MM:** I discovered D&D through my husband, who worked for Wizards of the Coast and had been a long-time player before that. It really wasn't a hard sell. I'm a fantasy fanatic, and spent years in my youth creating adventures in which my favorite cartoon characters combined forces to take on the villains. My first campaign setting was Dark Sun for fourth edition. I played Harena, a wasteland nomad who had exiled herself from her tribe. I really want to improve my



role-playing skills, though. Every time I play, even when I'm trying to roleplay a human male knight, my fellow players interpret my character as a female elf rogue.



(Select to view)

Can you tell us about some of the previous D&D designs you've created?

**MM:** I made **Chris Perkins' Dungeon Master costume** for PAX Prime 2012 after the D&D team at Wizards of the Coast had seen a costume I made for my husband. They told me what they wanted and I binged a number of episodes of the *Dungeons & Dragon* cartoon to view the Dungeon Master from all angles. One of my guiding principles comes from Sir Ian McKellen and the *Lord of the Rings* costume design team. Sir Ian expressed his awe at the level

of detail put into all the layers of his costume, even those that the cameras never see. The verisimilitude helps him get into character. Chris's Dungeon Master costume was made of four separate layers, rather than being just one garment that looks like four layers. I also tried to choose fabrics that would have been available to a cartoon sorcerer. I wanted the robe to feel weighty and lush, so I used a red velveteen.

**The myconid king from PAX Prime 2015** was my first opportunity to design a costume from scratch. Myconids look like fungal Groots to me, but not very human-like. I wasn't going to be able to make Chris look like the myconids, but I could make him look fungal. I combined elements of mushroom stalks (the columnar robe), fungal spore pockets (the ridged texture on the vest), and shelf fungus (the shapes of the collar and hat). The color choices came straight out of a photo of real shelf fungus.

**AS:** I made the **blue dragon mask for Gen Con 2014**. That was so much fun! A friend of mine who works at Lone Shark Games reached out to me because she was familiar with my other mask work. I got to

turn concept art and a story idea into a real physical piece of art. Playing games is fun, but there's something really special about being able to hold a piece of the story in your hands!

**What was the inspiration behind Chris Perkins' costume for this year's PAX West ?**

**MM:** Embracing the Asian inspiration for the gold dragon's appearance and behavior in D&D, and drawing on my personal Chinese heritage, I designed a costume reminiscent of traditional Han dynasty-era robes (the hanfu). I wanted to evoke "dragon" without actually making a true dragon costume. The long, full sleeves are shaped to look like wings, but only when they are spread wide.

The front flap is painted with the giant rune for "wurm." In many costumes, this flap features some kind of embroidery. These robes are held together with a wide belt, made from faux leather and shaped like the underbelly scales of a gold dragon. The main robe features sporadic sections of dragon-scale texture—using a technique shared by the costume embroiderer from *Game of Thrones*.



Select to view)

**Tell us a little about the process of creating Chris's costume. What kind of materials did you use? How long did it take?**

**MM:** After a meeting between Chris, Amanda, and I, we each sketched concepts and then met again to finalize our design. I used fabrics that you might find in the special occasion or costume section of a fabric store. It took a couple of trips to different stores to decide on the right shades of gold.

The wings needed to float, and were made of a sheer, lightweight gauze fabric. The robe was sleek and shiny, but I added a lining fabric to give it weight.



I always keep track of the number of hours I spend on costumes. I started designing the costume in June, picked up the fabric in July, then finalized the pattern pieces and had all the components ready for sewing at the start of August. This is at least a one-hundred-hour project, pushing two hundred. There were many hours of Netflix binge-watching as I hand-stitched the dragon-scale embroidery!

**The gold dragon mask looked amazing. Talk us through the making of that piece.**

**AS:** Whenever I make a mask, I start by sketching a design. Turning a flat material like leather into a three-dimensional sculpture requires careful planning! With a sketch, I try to figure out how many pieces the mask will be made from, and what shapes I need to cut from the leather to make those pieces. **For the Gold Dragon mask**, there were two main pieces—the mask and the large horns—plus the small pieces I used for the smaller horns and eyelids.



Once I like my sketch, I draw out my pieces on the leather with Sharpie. Then for sculpting, I take my cut leather pieces and get them wet. This makes the leather soft and malleable, and I just shape it with my hands until it looks how I want it to. I leave it to dry overnight, and then I glue the pieces together using hot glue, which dries quickly and holds well on a porous material like leather.

At that point, I do a base coat of black acrylic paint, which smoothes everything together and covers up all my pen marks. For the gold dragon, I had to be sure to coordinate my paint color with the colors of the costume Meris was making, so she gave me fabric swatches to match. The main part of the costume was this gold fabric with silvery threads shot through it, which was definitely a challenge! In the end, I had to do a warmer gold base coat with silvery highlights brushed over the top, and shaded with the dark-bronze color Meris used on the belt. It's not a perfect match, but I think it turned out pretty well!

**What other D&D and fantasy projects do you have in store for the future?**

**MM:** I just participated in the **D&D Extra Life game**, and that reminded me that it's been too long since I've been in a campaign. I'd love to play in a game with my husband for a change—he's usually my DM. I have joked about making my cat a dragon costume . . . so she could be a cat-dragon.





**AS:** Someday if I ever have time, I would love to learn how to make puppets. I've always been super fascinated by the work of Jim Henson's Creature Shop, especially the Brian Froud fantasy designs in *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth*. CGI creatures are cool and definitely very versatile, but I would love to make creatures you can touch.

Where can *Dragon+* readers find out more about your work?

**MM:** My blog, [www.fabricalchemist.com](http://www.fabricalchemist.com), is where I try to write up every costume I make. Right now, I'm a year behind. You can also follow me [on Instagram](#) for in-progress and cat photos, and on [Twitter](#).

**AS:** My professional portfolio is [on my website](#). But if you just want to follow all the stuff I make, I'd recommend [my art tag on Tumblr](#), which includes my illustration and sculpture work. And if you love what I do, you can donate to [my Patreon](#), where I occasionally post behind-the-scenes work like sketches and designs!

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Now that you've learned how Meris and Amanda made Chris's costume, are you ready to try some Halloween-themed D&D cosplay of your own? See "[Creative Halloween Cosplay](#)" in this issue for some expert tips from Meris, Amanda, and Dice, Camera, Action's Holly Conrad.

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## Creative Halloween Cosplay

Dress yourself scary with this expert advice for the spooky season.

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*The nights are dark, a chill hangs in the air, and there's a treasure trove of candy to be secured—all of which means it's the perfect time to try some Halloween cosplay. Whether you want to become a generically creepy monster or have a specific D&D-themed costume in mind, Dragon+ can help as we reveal our top tips for creative cosplay.*

*First, we hear from costumers Meris Mullaley and Amanda Sharpe (who've collaborated on some of Chris Perkins' PAX costumes; see “**Dressing the Dungeon Master**” in this issue) on how to source and*



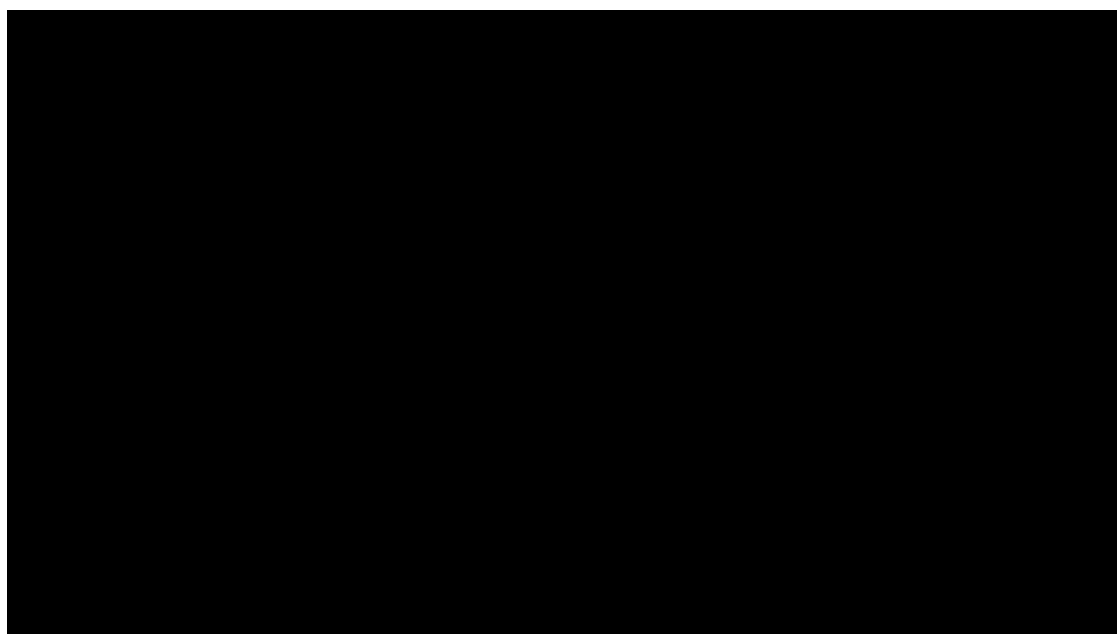
*create your own unique look. Then Dice, Camera, Action's Holly Conrad takes over, with five ideas on how to make yourself stand out from the Halloween crowd — so get ready to get creative!*

**Meris Mullaley:** Thrift stores are a great place to check out potential costumes—that's where I start. An oversized tunic, leggings, and tall boots gets you halfway toward a rogue, Link, or Legolas. Or see what you can find that's already made, like the leather belt and pouch I bought at a Renaissance fair. They can help turn any thrift-store tunic into a medieval fantasy garment, and I've used them for many costumes. Also consider painting store-bought toy weapons. Pick up a Nerf blaster or a plastic sword, then use your miniature-painting skills to make that plastic look like metal or wood.

**Amanda Sharpe:** The best costume advice I can give is that someone has probably already solved the problem you're tackling. There's a huge world of cosplay and costuming, and even if no one has done the specific costume you're trying to make, you might be facing complications that someone else has already resolved and blogged about. Whenever I don't know how to make something, I find out how someone made something else. The bottom line: get inspired by other cosplayers!

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## 5 TIPS FOR D&D-THEMED COSPLAY



*Dice Camera Action's Holly Conrad is a costume and cosplay*

veteran, and plays tiefling Strix in the **show's latest adventures in Borovia**. Commander Holly has put together five simple tips to make your D&D cosplay costume really stand out this Halloween. As well, she's put together a special video for *Dragon+* showing how you can combine those tips to transform yourself into a fearsome-looking tiefling or make your own costume extra spooky, especially scary, or just plain gross.



Scars are relatively easy to do, and can make you look as though you've survived a dungeon or two. I use **rigid collodion**, which is applied to the skin to bring it together and cause it to look scarred. If your character is a battle-worn fighter—or just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time—scars will definitely make your costume more convincing. You can also go ahead and add some blood if you're feeling fresh! Not too much, though, unless you've dropped below 0 hp!





This is for all you tieflings, half-orcs, and vampires out there. My favorite brand of pointy teeth are **Scarecrow vampire fangs**. They're super easy to wear, and they mold perfectly to your teeth so that they don't fall out while you're wearing them. But you can still easily take them out so you can eat! (If you're a vampire, please don't eat your friends. That's rude.)



Ears can really make a costume something amazing. There are all kinds of different ears you can make or buy, including from [makeup stores](#) and on [Etsy](#). The ears I'm applying in my video are foam latex, which requires special adhesives. With slip latex ears, you can just use spirit gum (unless you want to get fancy). But feel free to be creative. There are tutorials out there that can help you make small elf ears just using tape and makeup, so don't let finances be a burden if you need your costume to look good on the cheap! Ears are perfect for tieflings, elves, half-elves, drow, halflings, gnomes, and more! Besides humans, of course—you already have your own ears.



## 4. CONTACTS AND MAKEUP



One of my favorite ways to change the look of a costume is to add contact lenses. Changing the color or shape of your iris can alter your appearance dramatically and make a costume look amazing. The contacts I'm using in the video are white-out contacts from [Pinky Paradise](#). They make you look as though you have dead eyes! They're perfect if you've decided to dress up as a Strahd zombie or some other undead character.

You don't need to be a pro to do makeup for creatures and characters. Just make sure you get a good even covering all the way down your neck, powder with translucent powder to seal the makeup, and add a bit of contouring with darker and lighter tones. After this, you just need to add some lip and eye color, or smudge some makeup around until you look creepy. Again, be creative—there is no wrong or right way to do this! Think of your face as an art project and see what happens! The makeup I'm using in the video is [Rituel De Fille's color pots](#), because I like to use my fingers to apply it. But really, you can use any old makeup.



Ah yes, dirt. The best part. This finished makeup look is actually going to be my tiefling character Strix from *Dice, Camera, Action!* She's super gross, and adding dirt to her look really makes it convincing. I'm using **Dirtworks** dark brun, along with a few other colors. Just spray the dirt all over. Don't be shy!

When it comes to the actual costume, as Meris says, don't be afraid to go to a thrift store and check out what you can find. Cut clothes up, alter them, use whatever you can! Creativity is key here. With my Strix costume, I actually used a lot of **Creepy Cloth** to make it look gross. It's really cheap, and perfect if your character is undead or lives in a trash pile!





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## An Unlikely Hero

R.A. Salvatore talks to Matt Chapman about *Hero*, the explosive finale of the Homecoming series.

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**R**.A. Salvatore is a hard man to pin down. When *Dragon+* finally manages to speak to him, he's just arrived home from New York Comic Con and is busy making preparations for his daughter's wedding later that week. "My little girl's getting married Saturday up in Vermont. Just got to get the suit tailored, make sure all the little odds and ends are tied up, keep my brain straight, and then I can't wait," he says as we congratulate him. But it's another of his offspring we're really calling to talk about...

The *New York Times* bestselling author of the Legend of Drizzt series of novels is about to wrap up another trilogy featuring his most famous character. Drizzt Do'Urden first appeared in the Icewind Dale series of novels, having been created on a whim as a sidekick for Wulfgar, before going on to take center stage in one of the most successful fantasy series of all time. Salvatore has appeared at four conventions already this year, and with one still to go, he has no doubts about the character's popularity.

"I meet a lot of people who are excited about my DemonWars books,



my Spearwielder's Tale books, my other books in my own world. And at gaming conventions, I meet a lot of people who get excited about the Kickstarter I did with my sons, where I created my own gaming system. And when the Entreri and Jarlaxle fans show up, they can't be denied. If someone's a fan of one of those guys, I'm not going to mess with them. But it's mostly Drizzt that people want to talk about," Salvatore confirms. "And the thing is, a lot of the people that I meet have been with me on this journey for ten years, fifteen years, even twenty-eight years. At the last two conventions, I've signed four copies of *The Crystal Shard* first editions. These are paperback books from 1988, so that's pretty special."

What is it about Drizzt in particular that keeps readers coming back? "I think it's that he tries to do the right thing. Even when he's wrong, he's trying to do the right thing. I think that really matters to people, and he really is a hero."

Drizzt is somewhat of an unlikely hero, though. When Salvatore first suggested writing a character from the drow city of Menzoberranzan, nestled in the inhospitable Underdark, it was a trailblazing move. The author jokes that he got a lot of grief for that from Dungeon Masters around the world, who say everyone in their group suddenly wanted to play a good drow with two scimitars and a black cat—"But it's not Drizzt!" That, he claims, is what happens when you say it's OK to like drow. "In the old D&D game, you could put in a first-level drow with his super-magical armor and super-magical sword, and wipe out a higher-level party. And even if they killed him and got all that great gear, they couldn't even use it because it would melt when it came to the surface. So I actually do feel a little guilty for ruining the best monster in D&D, but it's a trade-off."

Not that Drizzt has spent much time in the Underdark during his twenty-eight-year storyline. However, the second book in the Homecoming trilogy—the clue's in the title—does see him venture back into that perilous region to make what must be a difficult return. If readers assume that he might stay a little longer as the threat of the demonic presence subsides in the Underdark, they might be surprised to learn that his attempts to find peace involve a return to the surface world. They might be less surprised to find that—as it is for most adventurers cursed to lead interesting lives—a happy ending is hard to come by.

“There’s not a lot of peace in Drizzt’s life,” Salvatore says. “One of the most important points of the story is that the entire foundation under Drizzt’s feet has gone through a very rough period. And this goes way back to the Neverwinter series after *The Ghost King*, when he’s pretty much lost all his friends and he starts going down a dark path. Then you have *The Companions* and kind of a reboot of everything. And now there’s a real question in Drizzt’s mind of what’s real. Is this real?”

One of the problems Drizzt faces is that his return to his homeland comes during a weakening of the *faerzress*, caused by the events in the wider D&D *Rage of Demons* storyline, and he’s been affected by this Underdark affliction. His journey back to face his demons turns out to have literal, spiritual, and mental connotations. That gave Salvatore the ability to raise issues rarely seen within fantasy novels.

“I always love it when I find something in the book to latch onto a theme that’s going around today,” he explains. “Maybe a new understanding we have about things. And so there’s a scene in *Hero* with Jarlaxle and a couple of other people, where they’re talking about what’s wrong with Drizzt. And someone looks at Jarlaxle and says, ‘You’re disappointed in him. For the first time, you’re disappointed in him. Because you think he should just be able to will himself out of this. Your mind is healthy, so you think it should be like that. But he can no more will himself out of this than a person who just broke both of his legs could get up and run.’ Being able to touch on those kinds of things makes the books more real to me, and it relates them to people I know. And that’s what makes this worth it to me on an entirely different level.”

Sounds like a happy ending might be hard to come by, despite Salvatore describing Drizzt’s quest for peace, family, and love as being at the centerpiece of his twenty-eight-year story arc. “I don’t know that it’ll ever properly tie up, the whole happily ever after thing, because there’s always something in him that wants that next adventure too. But at the end of this book, I think a lot of people are going to go, ‘OK, now what? Wait. What?’ And I love that.”

Salvatore’s enthusiasm for *Hero* is so infectious that we’re left in no doubt that this will be a high point for fans of Drizzt. Salvatore describes the Homecoming trilogy as one storyline, and says he feels



as strongly about it as he did with *Homeland*, way back in the beginning.

“I really had to get these three books right. First with *Archmage*, then *Maestro*, and now *Hero*. I had to get them right because I knew it was going to be a really big moment for Drizzt and for some of the other people around him. And I’m very satisfied, you can probably tell.

“A lot of times when I’m writing, I know the general strokes of the story, but the particulars surprise me all the time. Sometimes they surprise me like, ‘Boy, how am I going to get out of this?’ And other times they surprise me and I go, ‘Wow! Really?’ And this was a wow. When I wrote this book, it blew my mind at the end. And I’m absolutely psyched about it.”

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# Best of the DMs Guild

This month: Intriguing encounters in the Underdark and a dozen new archetypes to explore.



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**T**he **Dungeon Masters Guild** is the perfect place to create, share, and publish your D&D adventures. Since the inception of the DMs Guild, hundreds of Dungeon Masters, designers, artists, and fans have created an abundance of campaigns, characters, archetypes, and reference material designed to enhance and expand your D&D sessions. In each issue of *Dragon+*, “The Best of the DMs Guild” highlights both a brand-new adventure and an interesting character archetype or useful supplement for you to enjoy. This month, we’ve selected the adventure *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark*



by Tony Petrecca, and *Additional Archetypes* (a selection of twelve new subclasses) by Kyle Consover.

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*Journey Through the Center of the Underdark* is a supplement designed to enliven the process of traveling through the labyrinthine passageways of the Underdark. Designed for a party of four to six 4th- and 5th-level characters, it contains ten diverse encounters (ranging from a drow caravan to an enchanted psychedelic garden), features colorful NPCs like Nivram the paranoid stone giant, and allows characters to face off against two new monster variants, including the duergar crawler commando. It's a useful tome for DMs looking to inject more character and flavor into their Underdark expeditions.



Tony Petrecca

So let's meet Tony Petrecca, designer of *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark*, and talk about how he created and published the adventure.

### What's your background—how did you first get involved in D&D?

Sometime around sixth grade, circa 1980 or so, a school friend of mine was drawing something on graph paper while waiting for the bell to ring. He told me it was a dungeon, and I was instantly fascinated. Soon enough, I was taking my first character, a fighter with a mace, solo through *In Search of the Unknown*, where I ducked into a room to hide from an approaching orc only to come face to face with an angry gnoll. I was hooked. I used my paper route money to pick up the blue box basic set, complete with *The Keep on the Borderlands* and cardboard chits instead of dice. Not long after, I designed my first dungeon—a single level with a purple worm at one end and a red dragon at the other. I hope my adventure design has improved a bit since!

### What kind of DM are you?

I'm not a killer DM (unless I'm running *Tomb of Horrors*), but I do want to present a tough challenge. I'm not a rules lawyer, in that I'd

much rather keep the books closed and keep the session moving along. This is one of the biggest reasons that fifth edition is rapidly becoming my favorite.

I've been blessed to play with the same group of friends for many years. Several of us have been gaming together since the Caves of Chaos, and several more since the start of the new millennium. With their help, I've managed to pull off a few epic, multiyear campaigns weaving published adventures with my own in my homebrew world, which is a real thrill. As a result, yesterday's PCs become today's NPCs, legends, and deities. The repercussions of the last campaign become the seeds of the next. I love seeing the history of the world built by the players and their actions.

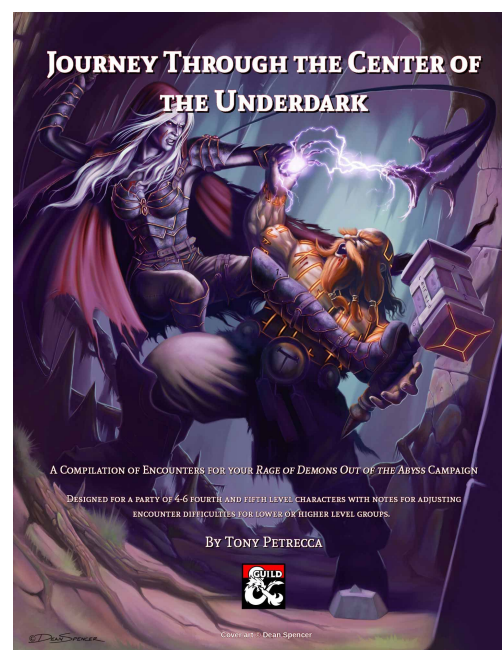
Fun! That's rule number one, since fun is the entire point. My fun comes from trying to devise new and interesting challenges and scenarios, and then bringing those scenarios to the table and watching my players take them in entirely unexpected directions. I'm thrilled when the players surprise me and turn a challenging encounter into a cakewalk through their creative play.

Ultimately, my goal is for any given session to have at least one climactic encounter that ends with the characters breathless, having just survived by the skin of their teeth. An encounter with several waves of monsters gives me the opportunity to adjust the difficulty on the fly and hit that sweet spot. "The Gorge of the Drow" in *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark* provides a fine example of my 'waves theory' in action.

**What inspired you to create *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark*?**

For several years, I'd thought about publishing some of the adventures I'd run for my home game, but I never quite got around to it. Too busy being a dad with a day job and running a weekly game. When the fifth edition OGL was published, followed by the creation of the **DMs Guild**, several





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of my excuses were wiped from existence.

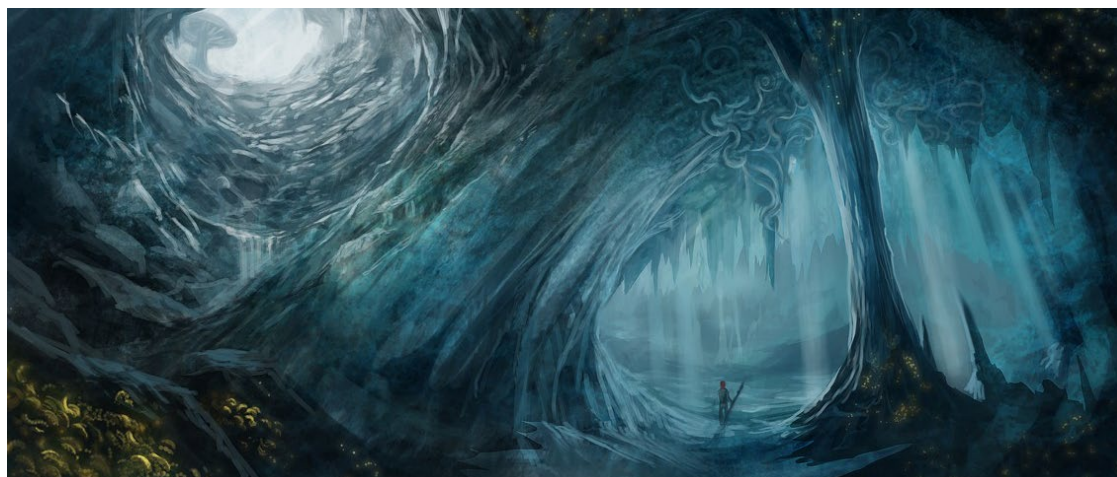
At that time, I was running *Out of the Abyss* for my group, which requires a lot of DM prep to flesh out traveling from point A to point B. *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark* is a compilation of the travel encounters I ran for my *OOTA* home game, cleaned up for publication. In my mind, this release was just meant to be my rookie effort, seeing what this whole self-publishing thing was all about. I had no idea it would take off like it did. Platinum success?! Inconceivable! I'm absolutely thrilled!

**What was it about the Underdark that particularly appealed to you as an adventure setting? What unique challenges does it present to a designer?**

It's such a classic, iconic setting, and one that's been a part of my D&D experience since I first picked up *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*. For a surface dweller, the Underdark can suggest encounters with unknown threats around every corner with no respite, but that's not the whole story. This environment has given rise to unique cultures with ancient civilizations whose histories are largely detached from the surface world. Outsiders might not be warmly welcomed, but wise, cautious, diplomatic characters can earn the trust of the locals if they tread carefully. Rushing into Gracklstugh or Menzoberranzan with swords drawn isn't likely to go well, but showing respect for the locals might just earn you some unlikely allies.

The vastness of the Underdark provides endless opportunity for a

designer, but it also creates the biggest challenge. There are only so many ways one can describe traveling through another narrow tunnel, another deep crevasse, or another vast, stalagmite-filled gallery, but it does the Underdark a disservice to hand-wave the journey. Hopefully, that's where my encounters come in handy, providing interesting challenges to liven up the long, strange trip.



We really liked some of the characters you created, like Nettie the invisible ettin and Nivram the paranoid stone giant. How do you aim to give personality to monsters and create memorable encounters?

Obviously, I'm not afraid to borrow from pop and geek culture (Monty Python, Douglas Adams, and the movie *Heavy Metal* come to mind). But for me, the character grows from the environment. You start with a very simple raw concept—a stone giant, an orog, an enchanting woman—and then build those characters by asking the right questions about the setting they find themselves in.

If I were a stone giant in an Underdark that is filling with demonic madness, how might I react when the madness overwhelms me? How might the deluded but absolutely devoted magical worshipper of an ettin respond to threats to its god? How might a pair of AWOL duergar who enjoy their intoxicants a bit too much react to strangers? Asking a few good questions from that NPC's point of view goes a long way toward fleshing out a believable persona.

What was your favorite part of creating the adventure?

I certainly loved plotting out the events of the gorge. I loved wondering what my players would do when a squadron of orcs disturbed their rest on top of a giant mushroom. And I had a blast imagining life in Annarei's Garden. True story—when I was



hamming it up as Nettie the invisible ettin, my players had such a good time that they unanimously awarded me, the DM, a point of inspiration! That was a hoot.

But there's probably one moment in the process that stands out a bit above the rest. One evening, I was browsing stock art and came across Dean Spencer's beautiful "Drow vs Dwarf" piece. It was such a perfect piece for my cover that I got goosebumps. I actually allowed myself to believe that maybe, just maybe, with Dean's amazing art gracing my cover, I might catch a few eyes, so I picked it up. Best \$14 I ever spent!

**We really enjoyed the *Annarei's Garden* section of the adventure. Tell us a little more about how that came about?**

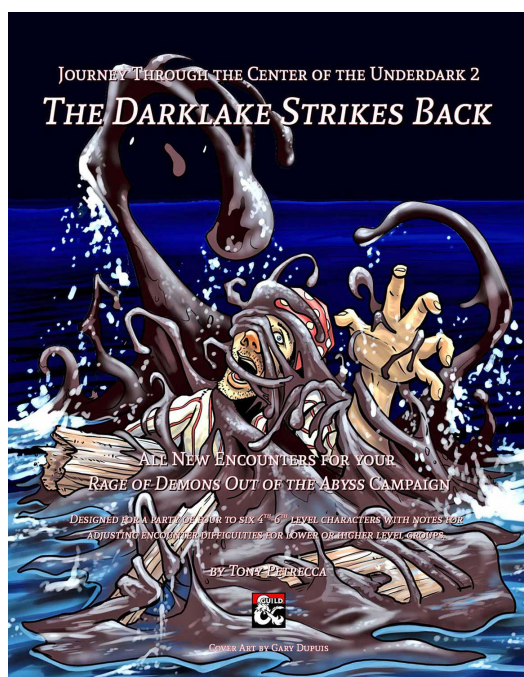
I wanted to introduce a new and interesting opportunity for rest and roleplaying that had its own inherent dangers, and the idea of an Underdark commune of misfits came to mind. The Underdark has always felt a bit psychedelic to me, so the thought of luminescent crystals and a herd of fire beetles adding to an existing light show of phosphorescent fungi painted an appropriately bizarre, rave-like setting that seemed entirely plausible in the alien depths.

Once I had the setting established, it needed characters, especially a leader. And so Annarei was born, based loosely on a lovely friend from my youth. I think my favorite aspect about Annarei is her sincerity—all are welcome, and she truly wants nothing but peace and pleasure for her guests. Her garden provides ample temptation for characters, but there's no coercion whatsoever. Wise or unwise choices are entirely in the hands of the PCs. If I can be a little prideful, "Somewhere an ogre giggles" might be one of my favorite phrases I've ever written. I kind of want it on a T-shirt.

**You've created a couple of new creatures for the adventure. How do you approach new monster design?**

I knew I wanted a creature in the hot springs, so I flipped my *Monster Manual* open and random luck popped open the shambling mound page. With just a brief glance, the reskin seemed like a simple yet effective idea that my players would never see coming. Sometimes necessity is the mother of invention. I wanted Annarei's garden to be lit by fire beetles, but why are so many in that cavern? They're herded, I thought. Perfect, but what's herding them? How about

duergar using trained carrion crawlers as mounts? The duergar crawler commando was born! But I have to give credit where credit is due—the Cavalry Training and Crawler Commando creature features were borrowed from Scott Holden’s goblin beast-master in his *D&D Denizens: Goblins*. I heartily recommend Scott’s entire “Citizens and Denizens” line.



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You have quite a few other adventures and resources on the DMs Guild, including a sequel. Can you tell us a little about those? Are there any you’d recommend to *Dragon+* readers?

If you like *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark*, then the sequel—*The Darklake Strikes Back*—should be enjoyable too. It is a bit different from *Journey*, as there are fewer traveling encounters. The highlight of *The Darklake Strikes Back* is one large set piece. We were ready for a straight-up action session in my home game, and cliché or not, I

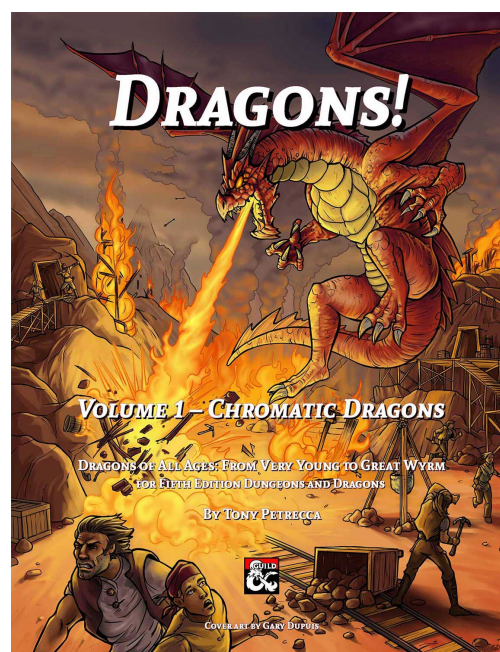
love a good frontal assault on a keep, with a dungeon below and a dragon at the bottom. It’s a running-battle type of affair that should keep players on their toes. DMs should be sure to let characters get a full rest first!

I love the fifth edition *Monster Manual*, but I missed the wider variety of dragon age categories from previous editions, so I filled in the gaps. *Dragons! Volume 1 – Chromatic Dragons* and *Dragons! Volume 2 – Metallic Dragons* provide six additional age categories for each dragon type—very young, juvenile, young adult, old, wyrmling, and great wyrmling—which provide DMs with a lot more flexibility through all challenge ratings for the dragons in their games.

I was excited to get my first ever editing credit recently, for fellow DMs Guild publisher Glen Cooper’s *The Lost Portal*. Folks



should take a look at that one. It's a fun adventure with some charming hand-drawn cartography by Glen. Finally, the good folks at **Fat Goblin Games** invited me to write some playable races for them, so three different *Fifth Edition Racial Options* for kobolds, goblins, and hobgoblins are out there providing new playable races, subraces, skills, feats, and magic items for folks to integrate into their games.



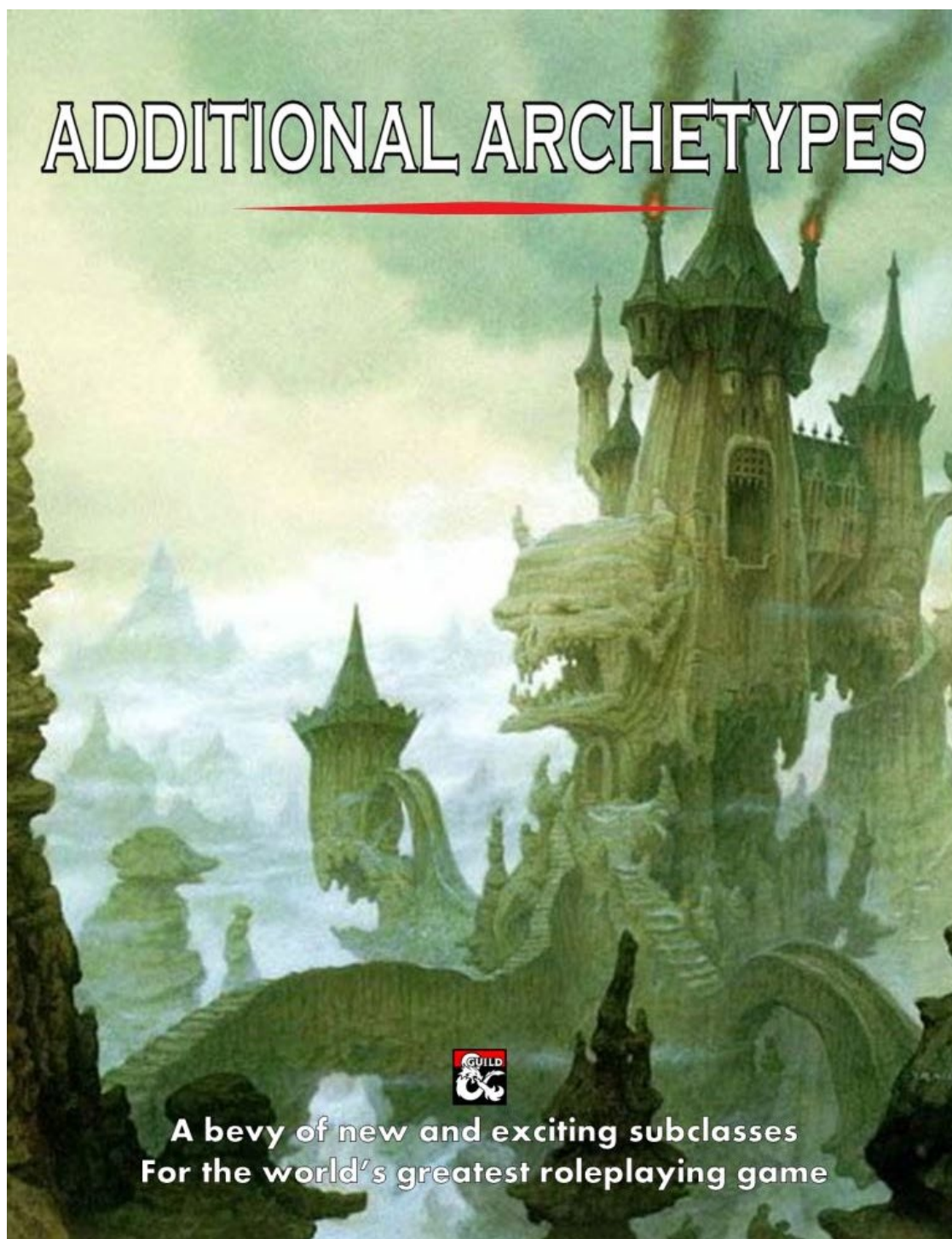
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## What advice and tips do you have for players looking to create for the DMs Guild?

Write it, playtest it, rewrite it, give it to others to playtest, edit and proofread it, then rewrite it again. Organize your product in a logical manner, provide a decent, clean layout, and give it a table of contents, ideally with internal links. The right cover art will draw attention to your release, helping you stand out, but be sure to acquire the appropriate rights to any and all art you use. Don't be afraid to use the full preview function of the DMs Guild site to give your audience a large sample of what they can expect to find. Once it's ready, set a fair price for your work but don't undervalue yourself. Then get it out there!

## Are you planning more content for the DMs Guild?

There are several adventures I've run at home that I look forward to sharing. One is an action-packed canyon-crawling adventure called *The Killer Kobolds of Crag Canyon* that should provide a tough challenge for parties of 5th to 10th level. Spoiler alert: it's got a kobold or two in it, and they're Tucker style. I've also got *The Goblin Terror* and *The Hills Have Orcs* in the works. Finally, there might someday be a *Journey Through the Center of the Underdark 3 – Return of the Succubus*, but my home game has first dibs. After that, we shall see where the inspiration takes me.



## Additional Archetypes

by Kyle Consolver

Kyle Consolver's *Additional Archetypes* presents twelve new subclasses for fifth edition players who want to explore a more diverse lineup of character classes. These range from the alchemist (a roguish archetype that uses potions and poisons alike to empower allies and weaken enemies) to the Way of the Swift Step (a monastic



tradition that allows monks to enhance their speed so they are able to bend the laws of time and space).

Here's a small extract showing what the archetypes hold.

### Otherworldly Patron: The Shadow

You have made a pact with a being who dwells in the darkness. Such creatures aim to spread despair and snuff out the light in the world.

Your pact may be with a ruler of Shadowfell or a powerful creature that dwells in the Underdark. While you may not have the same goals as your patrons, the gifts they bestow upon you as a result of the pact, thrive in the darkest caverns or under the cover of night.

## Shadow Expanded Spell List

1st *bane, ray of sickness*

2nd *blindness/deafness, pass without trace*

3rd *bestow curse, speak with dead*

4th *confusion/phantasmal killer*

5th *antilife shell, contagion*

Barbarians, for example, may now choose the Path of the Battle Scarred which allows them to use self-inflicted injuries to gain the edge in fights, trading hit points for abilities like Bloodied Fists which grant additional damage on unarmed strikes. At sixth level it also grants them traits like Unfriendly Facade which means their terrifying visage gains them advantage on intimidation checks, but disadvantage on persuasion rolls.

Druids can explore the Circle of the Crescent, which bring creative changes to their shape shifting abilities, bridging the gap between human and beast forms, while enjoying the best features of both. Druids of this circle may retain the claws of their bear form or sprout the wings of an eagle but keep their human arms to grapple foes, in an archetype which emphasizes both inspiration and ingenuity.

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If you'd like to explore [Additional Archetypes](#), it costs just a single

dollar on the **DMs Guild**. As well as hundreds of other campaigns, adventures, and player archetypes, you can also sample Kyle's **Seafarer's Supplement**, which he has produced especially for Storm King's Thunder.

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## Volo's Guide to Hags/Slithering Tracker

Well met, adventurer. You seem like a curious sort who enjoys the finer things. Permit me to thrust upon you my latest masterwork, years in the making. I think you'll find it well worth your time and money. First, a warning: here there be monsters!

---

**S**o begins the preface to Volo's Guide to Monsters, written by the legendary (to his own mind, at least) Volothamp Geddarm. In this issue of Dragon+, we're thrilled to offer an early look inside this new book—an immersive 224-page volume filled with beautiful illustrations and in-depth lore.

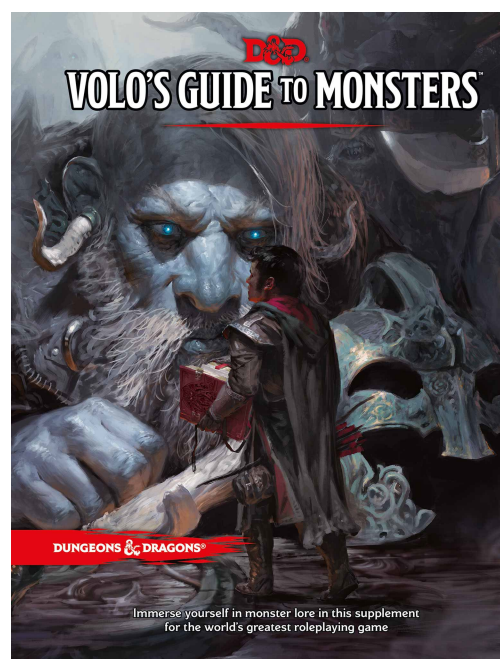
### About the Book

The esteemed loremaster Volo is



back, and he's written a fantastical dissertation covering some of the most iconic monsters in the Forgotten Realms. Unfortunately, the legendary Sage of Shadowdale—Elminster himself—maintains that Volo's grasp of many of the important details isn't quite right.

Don't miss out as Volo and Elminster square off (academically speaking, of course) to illuminate the uninitiated on creatures both common and obscure. Here's what you can expect to find within the pages of Volo's Guide to Monsters:



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**Chapter 1:** Monster Lore takes several iconic D&D monsters and provides additional information about their origins, their disposition and behavior, and their lairs—above and beyond what's found in the Monster Manual.

**Chapter 2:** Character Races presents character races representing some of the more distinctive options in the D&D multiverse.

**Chapter 3:** Bestiary provides game statistics and lore for nearly one hundred monsters suitable for any D&D campaign.

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## Chapter 1: Monster Lore

In keeping with our look at Betrayal at House on the Hill: Widow's Walk, what better monster to preview than the hag!

Hags are mysterious, unfathomable, and dangerous, especially from the viewpoint of

mortals. One day a hag might be stealing and eating children that wander into the woods. On another day, she might be making lewd jokes to adventurers asking her for advice, while on the next, she might be uprooting saplings to make a fence around her home for impaling intruders. It is nearly impossible to predict how a hag will act from day to day—or even moment to moment—which is why folk with any wisdom at all give hags a wide berth.



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If you plunder this chapter for ideas and maps the next time you create an adventure or a villain, then this material has served its purpose. We hope that, as you explore each monster section, you'll come up with new ways to challenge and entertain your players, as well as find new things that you can borrow for your own D&D campaign.

## HAG PREVIEW

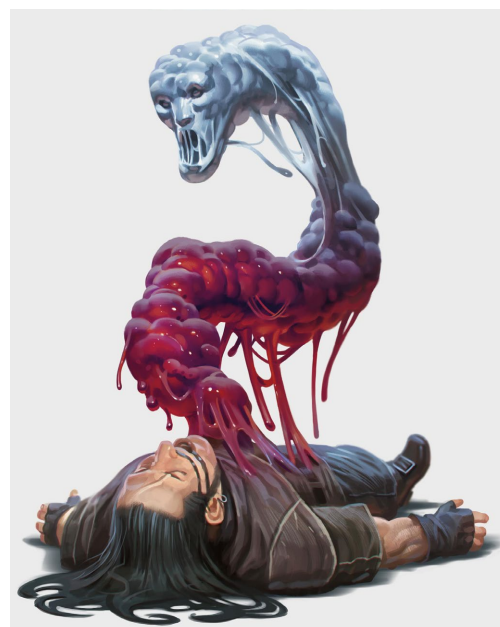
## Chapter 2: Bestiary

As with the Monster Manual, Volo's Guide to Monsters attempts to capture the essence of each creature, focusing on specific traits that make a monster unique and that encourage DMs to use it. To continue our coverage of the



hag, we wanted to preview one version from the book—the annis hag.

In this issue's welcome letter, we discussed Dragon 86—featuring “The Ecology of the Slithering Tracker,” written by Ed Greenwood! The new slithering tracker has undergone a bit of evolution from its ooze-like form in the first edition Monster Manual, and is now a creature whose concept now even further matches its name.



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[Annis Hag Preview](#)

[Slithering Tracker Preview](#)

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## HAG PERSONALITY TRAITS

d8	Personality Trait
1	I have made subtle insults into an art form.
2	I always act unpleasant so others never learn of my secret affections.
3	I enjoy wagers as parts of my bargains, which increase the risk and the stakes.
4	I laugh at my own jokes—the darker, the better.
5	I never volunteer information, and I respond only to questions.
6	I offer generous terms in my deals, but the cost for defaulting is exceedingly high.
7	I require all of my bargains to be put in writing and signed in the other party's blood.
8	I am very superstitious, and I see omens in every event and action around me.

## HAG IDEALS

d6	Ideal
1	<b>Change.</b> I will metamorphose into every kind of hag and live a century as each, becoming something even greater in the end. (Chaotic)
2	<b>Community.</b> Loneliness is the path to madness. That is why I have minions to keep me company. (Lawful)
3	<b>Greed.</b> I will acquire the rarest and most valuable holy treasures to keep them from being used for good. (Evil)
4	<b>Independence.</b> I neither require nor want a coven. I will not be someone's equal. (Neutral)
5	<b>Power.</b> I will become an auntie or a grandmother, even if I have to kill my own mother to do it. (Evil)
6	<b>Ugliness.</b> I want to be envied for my appearance and my cruel heart. (Evil)

## HAG BONDS

d8	Bond
1	I hate a certain mortal family and steal one of their children each generation for my own purposes.
2	I am involved in a centuries-long feud with a rival of similar power and status.
3	My house holds everything that I hold dear. I can't abide visitors who threaten my hearth and home.
4	I owe a great favor to a hag grandmother.
5	I traded away something before I realized it was priceless, and now I want it back.
6	My daughter was taken from me, and I want to find her and train her.
7	My greatest rival and I know a secret word that will destroy both of us simultaneously.
8	The ones who looted and burned my home will pay for their offense.

## HAG FLAWS

d6	Flaw
1	I am too eager for gossip.
2	I can't resist flirting with a handsome man.
3	I have an allergy to a creature (such as cats or ravens) or a substance (such as apples or blood) that is important to my work.
4	I will not tell a lie, but I can still say nothing, nod suggestively, or bend the truth a little to suit my needs.
5	I am greatly weakened on the nights of the full moon.
6	I can't resist a clever riddle.

## HAG NAMES

Hags have whimsical names, often with a dark twist. A hag gives her newborn daughter a name that the girl keeps during her childhood, but upon gaining her full hag powers the daughter chooses her own name, which might or might not relate to her birth name. Some hags use different names in different guises, but still prefer their original name as their favorite.

The Hag Names table allows you to generate a hag's name. You can also select from the table or use it as inspiration.

Hags always have a title followed by a first name, or a first name followed by a last name. You can randomly determine (equal chance of either) whether a hag has a title or a last name.

## HAG NAMES

d12	Title	First Name	Last Name
1	Auntie	Agatha	Bonechewer
2	Black	Agnes	Frogwart
3	Cackling	Ethel	Greenteeth
4	Dismal	May	Gristlegums
5	Dread	Mathilda	Knucklebones
6	Driftwood	Morgan	Middenheap
7	Granny	Olga	Mudwallow
8	Old	Peggy	Pigtooth
9	Rickety	Polly	Titchwillow
10	Rotten	Sally	Toestealer
11	Turtleback	Ursula	Twigmouth
12	Wicked	Zilla	Wormwiggles

## WEIRD MAGIC

Over the course of a seemingly endless lifetime, a hag typically discovers or creates several unusual ways to use magic. The weird magic that hags can call upon comes in a number of forms and with various means of activation. Even those who have read scholarly books about hag lore can't predict what a particular hag might have up her sleeve.

A grandmother or some other hag of great age and renown might know unique rituals that can temporarily or permanently alter or transform a creature, bring back the dead for a limited time, rewrite memories, or siphon



# HAGS

Hags delight in bringing ruin and misery to the world. Malevolence is such a core part of a hag that it shapes her physical form and molds her magical powers.

## ANNIS HAG

Annis hags lair in mountains or hills. Despite being hunchbacked and hump-shouldered, they are the largest and most physically imposing of their kind, standing eight feet tall.

**Tormenting the Weak.** Although annis hags can easily tear a grown man apart, they love hunting children, preferring their flesh above all others. They use the flayed skin of such victims to make supple leather, and a hag's lair often shows the signs of this industry.

Annis hags leave tokens of their cruelty at the edges of forests and other areas they claim. In this way, they provoke fear and paranoia in nearby villages and settlements. To an annis hag, nothing is sweeter than turning a vibrant community into a place paralyzed with terror, where folk never venture out at night, strangers are met with suspicion and anger, and parents warn their children to "be good, or the annis will get you."

**Child Corrupter.** When an annis feels especially cruel, she disguises herself as a kindly-looking elderly woman, approaches a child in a remote place, and gives it an iron token that it can use to confide in her. Over time, "Granny" convinces the child that it's okay to have bad thoughts and do bad deeds—starting with breaking things or wandering outside without permission, then graduating to pushing someone down the stairs or setting a house on fire. Sooner or later, the child's family and community become terrified of the "bad seed" and must face the awful decision of whether the child should be punished or exiled.

**Tribe Mother.** Much in the way that they befriend children in order to corrupt them, annis hags have a tendency for adopting a group of ogres, trolls, or other loutish creatures, ruling them through brute strength, verbal abuse, and superstition.

**Covens.** An annis hag that is part of a coven (see the "Hag Covens" sidebar in the *Monster Manual*) has a challenge rating of 8 (3,900 XP).

### IRON TOKEN

An annis hag can pull out one of her iron teeth or nails and spend 1 minute shaping and polishing it into the form of a coin, a ring, or a tiny mirror. Thereafter, any creature that holds this *iron token* can have a whispered conversation with the hag, provided the creature and the hag are on the same plane of existence and within 10 miles of each other. The holder of the token can hear only the hag's voice, not those of any other creatures or any ambient noise around the hag. Similarly, the hag can hear the holder of the token and not the noise around it.

A hag can have up to three *iron tokens* active at one time. As an action, she can discern the direction and approximate distance to all of her active tokens. She can instantaneously deactivate any of her tokens at any distance (no action required), whereupon the token retains its current form but loses its magical properties.

## ANNIS HAG

Large fey, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d10 + 20)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +5

**Skills** Deception +5, Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Giant, Sylvan

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells:

3/day each: *disguise self* (including the form of a Medium humanoid), *fog cloud*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The annis makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Crushing Hug.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (9d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target takes 36 (9d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the hag's turns. The hag can't make attacks while grappling a creature in this way.





## SLITHERING TRACKER

Medium ooze, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Stealth +8

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold, fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** understands languages it knew in its previous form but can't speak

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Ambusher.** In the first round of a combat, the slithering tracker has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it surprised.

**Damage Transfer.** While grappling a creature, the slithering tracker takes only half the damage dealt to it, and the creature it is grappling takes the other half.

**False Appearance.** While the slithering tracker remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a puddle, unless an observer succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

**Keen Tracker.** The slithering tracker has advantage on Wisdom checks to track prey.

**Liquid Form.** The slithering tracker can enter an enemy's space and stop there. It can also move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Spider Climb.** The slithering tracker can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Watery Stealth.** While underwater, the slithering tracker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide, and it can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Life Leech.** One Large or smaller creature that the slithering tracker can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. In addition, the grappled target takes 16 (3d10) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The slithering tracker can grapple only one target at a time.



## SLITHERING TRACKER

The quest for revenge sometimes leads one to undergo a ritual whereby they transform into a body of semiliquid sentience known as a slithering tracker. Innocuous and insidious at the same time, a tracker flows into places where a normal creature can't go and brings its own brand of watery death down upon its quarry.

**Vengeance at Any Cost.** The ritual for creating a slithering tracker is known to hags, lichs, and priests who worship gods of vengeance. It can only be performed on a willing creature that hungers for revenge. The ritual sucks all the moisture from the person's body, killing it. Yet the mind lives on in the puddle of liquid that issues forth from the remains, and so too does the subject's insatiable need for retribution.

**Stealthy Assassins.** A slithering tracker tastes the ground it courses over, seeking any trace of its prey. To kill, a slithering tracker rises up and enshrouds a creature, attempting to drown the prey while also draining it of blood. A slithering tracker that has killed in this fashion becomes much easier to locate for a time, since its liquid form becomes tinged with blood and its body leaves a visible trail of the stuff behind it.

**Descent into Madness.** Achieving revenge against its target doesn't end a slithering tracker's existence, nor its hunger for blood. Some slithering trackers remain aware of their purpose and extend their quest for vengeance to others, such as anyone who supported or befriended the original target. Most of the time, though, a tracker's mind can't cope with being trapped in liquid form, unable to communicate, and driven by the desire for blood: after a tracker fulfills its duty, insanity takes over the creature, and it attacks indiscriminately until it is destroyed.





## Sea of Moving Ice

### NEVERWINTER *sets sail on the Sea of Moving Ice*

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The final chapter of the Storm King’s Thunder module arrives, as the Neverwinter MMORPG makes its debut on PlayStation 4.

Something stirs in the chill seas of the north. Following the success of the recent Storm King’s Thunder module, which saw players band together to fight Jarl Storvald and attempt to reclaim the legendary *Ring of Winter*, the Neverwinter MMO has recently launched on PlayStation 4—where it’s already attracted over two million new players.

But Storm King’s Thunder was just the beginning of a new adventure in the frozen wastes of the North. With a brand-new Sea of Moving Ice module now ready to explore, *Dragon+* caught up with Thomas “Mimic King” Foss, lead designer on the Neverwinter MMO, to learn more about this chilling final chapter of the giant-slaying saga.

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[Intrigue us with some details on the storyline for Sea of Moving Ice.](#)

### Does it follow directly on from the *Ring of Winter* plot line?

Faerûn's Sea of Moving Ice is the location of the final chapter of the Storm King's Thunder story. We take players deeper into that story, leading up to the finish when the heroes rally their forces to take back the *Ring of Winter*. The heroes must take on the frost giants and their slaves on their home ground, then assault Jarl Storvald's icy fortress of Svardsborg.

### What major new foes and adversaries wait in the Sea of Moving Ice module?

We've got a number of new enemies under the frost giant jarl's command!

**Skyld Frost Giants:** As Jarl Storvald's army grows, so do the types of soldiers in it. The skyld is pretty much the "guardian fighter" of the frost giant world. He'll tank you even as he buffs the rest of his allies. If you see one, take him down first!

**Runechanged Trolls:** Ice trolls have the ability to eat and digest pretty much anything. Several trolls have managed to eat some of the frost giants' explosive runes, digesting their power and incorporating it into their flesh. This makes them extremely dangerous when their health is low.



(Select to view)

**Ice Hunters:** The Ice Hunters are a tribe native to the Sea of Moving Ice whose members survive on the area's abundant fish and other wildlife, including seals and bears. Their people have been enslaved by the frost giants, and they now fight ferociously against Storvald's enemies.

**Dragon Turtle:** When you're fishing, have a care, for you might very well become the bait!

**Jarl Storvald:** One of our most challenging opponents yet. Given his



somewhat erratic control of the *Ring of Winter*, you and nine of your allies—alongside other famous heroes of the Sword Coast—will have to be on your game in order to defeat him. But I’m not going to give away any secrets on that fight just yet!



(Select to view)

Have you added any new features or mechanics to the game in Sea of Moving Ice?

When the characters first step off the longboat, they find themselves on an iceberg magically obscured from the sight of enemies. This hidden base camp is where you’re introduced to an Ice Hunter by the name of Maluk, who gives you a khyek outrigger boat and a deep-sea fishing pole. You need the khyek to travel the seas, and the pole to fish for quests and contests. As you provide fish for the amassing army, you’ll be rewarded with a faster and more impressive khyek.



(Select to view)

There's an even better khyek to be had, but you earn that using our new treasure map quest system! You can sometimes find a treasure map by catching a bottle instead of a fish. Speaking of fishing, up till now, fishing has been fairly basic in Neverwinter. We've listened to our players' feedback on that, and have come up with a new minigame system that makes fishing more engaging, allowing us to create better moment-to-moment gameplay and give out better rewards. It takes some time to get the hang of it, but once you figure it out, you're on your way to becoming a master fisher!

### What key places and new locations will players get to explore and experience?

The Sea of Moving Ice is a vast field of floating ice far to the north of the city of Neverwinter. Enormous icebergs and smaller floes swirl and grind in chaotic patterns that have tricked more than one experienced sea captain. The ice here is studded with the wrecks of ships that risked passage through the area and failed. The debris of civilizations both old and new is also trapped within the ice. Each winter when the ice pack expands, it scours islands and coastlines clean, preserving the treasures it claims in a frigid time capsule. This is one of the biggest zones we've built to date, with lots of room for exploration and for finding quests and treasure maps.





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What would you say are the key encounters and most exciting quests in the Sea of Moving Ice?

We have events called heroic encounters happening in the game. These are like “hot spots” where multiple players can jump in and help. For example, you can team up to rescue friendly Elk tribe warriors on a mission to steal a dragon turtle egg, and who end up caught between the dragon turtle mama and a swarm of ice mephits also intent on getting the egg!



(Select to view)

Storywise, it's also fun to attack the frost giant longships and take out their crews. Quests take you all across the Sea of Moving Ice, and help tell the story of how everyone is building up resources, intelligence, and troops for the final battle meant to take down Jarl Storvald. This battle is in the form of what we call a trial—a ten-person queued event. It's very challenging!

Will we see many heroes and guest stars from D&D appear in Sea of Moving Ice?

You will once again be adventuring with Wulfgar, Catti-brie, the frost giant hero Harshnag, and Artus Cimber. Kavatos Stormeye, a powerful wizard and member of the Arcane Brotherhood, has also come north to aid the heroes and fill the void left by Makos. In one quest, you team up with the storm giant princess Serissa to capture artifacts that the giants are using to create explosive rune-carved stones. If you're successful, you get to keep one of the artifacts.

Away from the Sea of Moving Ice, what events and specials should players keep an eye out for around Halloween?

This year's Masquerade of Liars





has the usual tricks, but with a new treat—your illusionist’s mask can now be refined up to legendary quality!

You’ve also created some intriguing art for the Neverwinter MMO on the RedBubble website, which supports the gaming charity Extra Life. Tell us a bit about your work with those folks.

(Select to view)

We were fortunate to be able to work with some very talented artists to create special interpretations of all our in-game modules. Some are obviously inspired by the story and content, whether it’s a boss or a unique setting. But others are just pieces that spoke to the artist from within the vast D&D universe after being immersed in Neverwinter lore. [You can check what’s available here.](#)

The marketing lead on Neverwinter, Roberto Piraino, set this project up. Everyone from the artists to Wizards of the Coast were really great when they heard “Neverwinter” and “charity” in the same sentence, especially when they found out that people would be able to buy everything from pillows to shirts to leggings with this Neverwinter art! The real beauty of this project is that we’ll keep updating it with more art, eventually including submissions from the fans. So players’ art might be up there some day for everyone to see, all the while supporting Extra Life!

Neverwinter has now arrived on PlayStation 4. What advice would you give PS4 players who want to try it out?

Just jump in and play! If you’ve never played an MMORPG before, make sure to explore and find contacts that have quests for you. Our quest path system makes it easy to locate quest areas and contacts. And remember, you’re in a world with literally thousands of players at any given time. Talk with them, ask them questions, and team up—that’s what it’s all about! Here’s a fun tip: in the tutorial on the

Sleeping Dragon Bridge, there's a treasure chest tucked away in the broken siege tower. Good luck!

What were the main design and technical challenges in bringing Neverwinter onto the PlayStation 4? Did you have to radically redesign any parts of the game for its PS4 debut?

Well, the user interface changes were the biggest challenge, as a console allows for fewer controls than a keyboard and mouse. That and making text changes that match the system. For example, on the PC, you press F to interact, but you can't do that on either of the consoles. Making the changes and running through all the content was a good deal of work, but we really think it was worth it, and we hope the players do as well.



(Select to view)

Are PlayStation 4 players very different from Neverwinter's traditional PC audience? What are their unique expectations?

The console players are newer to the Neverwinter world, which is exciting for us because they have so much content available to them at the start. We know that PvP is a big request, and we're really working towards adding in more, such as our solo and duo challenges. A lot of PvP fun is in class balance, something we're continually working on to create good gameplay for all. It is very challenging, but with the players' great feedback, it's happening.

Sony has opened up a bunch of exciting new developments recently.



## Does the prospect of a PlayStation VR version of Neverwinter excite you?

VR excites me very much, but I don't foresee being able to do anything with it anytime soon. If we could do VR, I think that teaming up in dungeon delves, or just riding my mount through Protector's Enclave would be a fabulous experience. Mostly, though, I'd want to fly on the back of a dragon!

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If you'd like to join legions of D&D fans for adventures in Neverwinter's free-to-play universe, simply head on over to this [PC sign-up page](#) to register and download. If you're a PlayStation 4 or Xbox One owner, simply search for "Neverwinter" in your console's online store.

You can now band together to defeat Jarl Storvald and his frost giant allies in the Storm King's Thunder module for Neverwinter, which launched earlier this month on both PlayStation 4 and Xbox One, after debuting on PC earlier in the year. The Sea of Moving Ice will be coming to PC on November 8, 2016, with Xbox One and PlayStation 4 versions following in later months.

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BACK TO TOP



## Demogorgon Prince of Demons

Thanks to *Stranger Things*, one of D&D's oldest villains is more recognizable than ever.

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*"Something is coming. Something hungry for blood. A shadow grows on the wall behind you, swallowing you in darkness. It . . . is almost here."*

*"What is it?"*

*"What if it's the Demogorgon?"*

*"Oh Jesus, we're so screwed if it's the Demogorgon!"*

**— *Stranger Things* episode one, "The Vanishing of Will Byers"**

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Netflix's *Stranger Things* is an urban-horror TV series set in 1983, around the time when the famed "red box" D&D *Basic Rules* hit store shelves. As such, it shouldn't be a surprise that the nerdy adolescent protagonists of the show are D&D players. When dark things lurch onto their doorsteps, they see them through the lens of their D&D games. Thus, a monstrous, otherworldly creature becomes "the Demogorgon" because that's the monster Dungeon Master Mike Wheeler caps his campaign with just as the show opens.



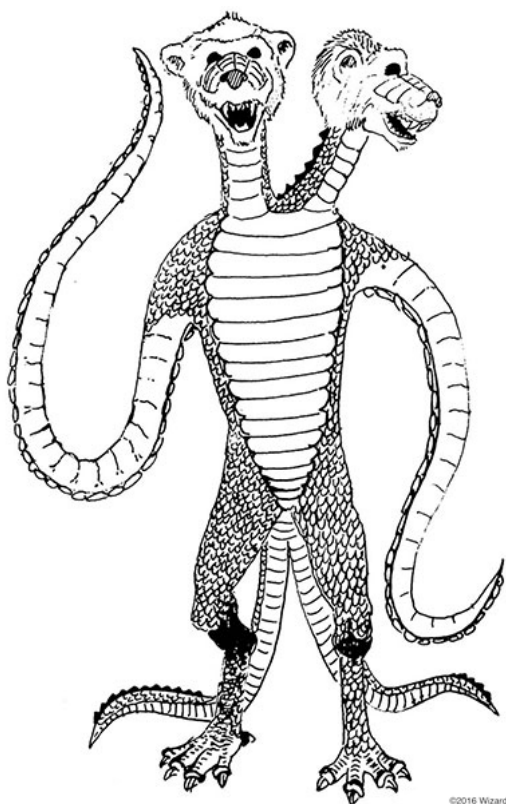
Now, the creature that the *Stranger Things* crew faces actually looks more like a dimensional shambler from Lovecraftian horror, but it's easy to understand why the kids associate it with Demogorgon instead. After all, Demogorgon remains one of the most evocative and scary monsters in D&D lore.

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## THE MYTHOLOGY OF DEMOGORGON

Gary Gygax discovered Demogorgon in “mythical demonologies,” but he was aware of a more ancient history that he recounted in a question-and-answer thread on the ENWorld.org website:

*“It was the Greeks, in their mythology, who had Demogorgon originally. He was held as the elemental force of earth that made plants grow, and was thus depicted as an old man covered with moss. Medieval writers demonized him into a terrible ruler of the underworld—a much more colorful depiction for use in an FRPG.”*



Eldritch Wizardry. (Select to view)

The classical history of Demogorgon is somewhat more complex than that. He doesn't actually appear in Greek sources, but instead debuted in a fourth-century commentary on *The Thebaid*, a first-century twelve-book story of the Theban Cycle. However, the commentator's use of the name might have been a mistake! Some scholars suggest that “Demogorgon” was actually a mistranslation of “demiurge,” referring to an unnamed creator of the world.

Whether a mistranslation or not, Demogorgon entered the mythological realm following that first appearance. He was a primordial god, and perhaps even the father of Pan—matching

Gygax's description of him, even if several centuries after the fact.

By the Renaissance, Demogorgon was everywhere. Around 1470, he was “cruel Demogorgon” in “The Floure and the Leafe,” an allegorical poem often attributed to Chaucer. In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* of the late sixteenth century, he was “in dull darknesse pent.” Then in 1667 in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Chaos and Night are attended by “Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name of Demogorgon.” Milton's usage is probably what led to Demogorgon being listed in demonologies, though some authors still preferred his (faux-) Greek roots, as when Percy Shelley featured him in *Prometheus Unbound* in 1820.

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## D&D'S EARLY DEMOGORGON

It might be largely thanks to Dungeons & Dragons that the more demonic take on Demogorgon eventually won out, because Gary Gygax decided “to make him the biggest of the demon baddies.” D&D's Demogorgon first appeared in the original “white box” game's *Supplement III: Eldritch Wizardry* in 1976. That book noted that “It is contended by some that this demon lord is supreme,” though Orcus would probably disagree. Nonetheless, when Demogorgon returned in the *AD&D Monster Manual*, he was officially called the “Prince of Demons,” even as it was noted that “the enmity between Demogorgon and Orcus is immense and unending.”





D&D: Immortals Rules. (Select to view)

Demogorgon’s demonic home debuted in 1987’s *Manual of the Planes*, which described his layer of the Abyss in the finest pulp tradition as “a jungle filled with dinosaurs, wild apes, and bird-like monsters in addition to the standard complement of demonic life.” Players were able to actually visit this realm just one year later, in adventure module H4, *The Throne of Bloodstone*. That adventure focused on fighting Orcus, but it also allowed players to take a magical mystery tour of the Abyss, including a visit to the “home layer of Demogorgon.” That layer is largely abstracted in the adventure, but the encounters maintain the pulpish feel of the plane, including fights with a stampede of twenty-five *Tyrannosaurus rex* and a demonic version of the prehistoric fish *dinichtys*. Particularly daring players could even battle Demogorgon if they wanted to—but if they killed him, their reward was an immediate assault by “100,000 demons”!

During the AD&D second edition era of 1989 to 2000, demons such as Demogorgon went underground. Despite that, the Prince of Demons turned up as the god of the *ixitxachitl* in the *Monster Mythology* supplement in 1992. He was then mentioned throughout the Planescape campaign setting’s line of supplements and adventures, through 1998. However, these were all minor

appearances. The Demogorgon of original D&D wouldn't truly wax again until the third edition D&D era.

## D&D'S LATER DEMOGORGON

The early Demogorgon was primarily a background character. His big debut as a real antagonist came in the original “adventure path” for third edition, consisting of eight adventures released between 2000 and 2002 whose climax was *Bastion of Broken Souls*. The red dragon Ashardalon was the biggest baddie of *Bastion of Broken Souls*, but for the first time ever, Demogorgon was working in the background as an important force. And this was Demogorgon with a new twist. The demon lord had always had two heads, but now he had a split nature as well—and was actually working against himself!

Demogorgon's return was part of the general return of demonkind in the third edition D&D era, which also led to the Prince of Demons turning up in *Book of Vile Darkness* in 2002, then in *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss* in 2006. But his next starring role was in the Savage Tide adventure path, which ran in *Dungeon* magazine from issue 139 to 150 (October 2006 to September 2007). As in the earlier *Bastion of Broken Souls*, Demogorgon was working in the background in the Savage Tide adventure path. But this time, the adventurers were able to confront him at the end—collecting high-powered allies before finally making war on Demogorgon's home, the Gaping Maw.



Third Edition: *Book of Vile Darkness*.  
(Select to view)

Meanwhile, an auxiliary article in *Dragon* 357 offered some of the most evocative details ever on Demogorgon. He was still the Prince of Demons, but now he was also the first of the tanar'ri—the demons created as slaves by the ancient and unknowable obyriths. An extensive history even described how Demogorgon made Graz'zt and



Orcus bow down before him when he claimed his crown (making it no wonder that Orcus still hates him).



Third Edition: Miniatures Handbook.  
(Select to view)

Demogorgon's nature changed dramatically with the advent of fourth edition D&D, when he became a mindless force of nature as detailed in 2009's *Monster Manual 2*. That sense of Demogorgon was expanded on in the 2015 adventure *Out of the Abyss*, in which the Prince of Demons was loosed to rampage through the Underdark, smashing, killing, and laying waste to the city of Menzoberranzan as he went. More than just a force of nature, the new Demogorgon is "the embodiment of chaos, madness, and destruction, seeking to corrupt all that is good and

undermine order in the multiverse, to see everything dragged howling into the infinite depths of the Abyss." Savvy adventurers should rightly fear this incarnation of the Prince of Demons!

Demogorgon has always been one of the iconic figures of D&D lore, but in the twenty-first century, *Bastion of Broken Souls*, the Savage Tide adventure path, and *Out of the Abyss* brought him to more prominence than ever. And that was before fourteen million viewers heard of him in the first season of *Stranger Things* . . .

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## D&D IN STRANGER THINGS

### SEASON ONE

*Stranger Things* offers one of the better depictions of Dungeons & Dragons in the media, both in its authenticity and in its positive vision of the game. In the series, the game is something that brings the protagonists together, allowing them to face their fears as a real fellowship. Even so, a few anachronisms appear in the show's treatment of D&D as it was in November 1983.

The kids are clearly playing the Dungeons & Dragons rules (as opposed to Advanced Dungeons & Dragons), because the rulebook from Frank Mentzer's D&D *Expert Rules* box set of 1983 shows up in a binder. Mind you, that version of the expert rulebook wasn't actually three-hole punched like the Zeb Cook edition of 1981, but it's safe to assume the kids punched it by hand (as many players of that era did).



Of course, to include Demogorgon in his game, Dungeon Master Mike would also have needed the AD&D *Monster Manual*, as the demon lord wouldn't show up in the D&D line until the publication of the *Immortals Rules* box set in 1986. But the lines between the different versions of D&D were pretty fuzzy in the 1980s, so this wouldn't have been unusual.

Fourth Edition: Monster Manual 2.  
(Select to view)

(Interestingly, when Demogorgon showed up in the *Immortals Rules*, it was with the new nickname of “The Child,” as “This demon often *polymorphs* into the form of a human child, apparently the essence of youth and innocence. When she chooses to fight, however, she assumes her normal form—an 18-foot-tall reptilian monster with two monkey heads atop sinewy necks . . .” The gender change itself is intriguing, not to mention the demon lord's polymorphed form in the context of *Stranger Things*!)





Fifth Edition: Rage of Demons Storyline. (Select to view)

When Mike slams down the Demogorgon miniature, it's a beautiful cast produced by John Dennett for Grenadier as part of their Fantasy Lords line—but that particular miniature wasn't designed and produced until 1984. The kids also have a short discussion about their adventures in Bloodstone Pass, a famous location in the Forgotten Realms that wouldn't be introduced until 1985's adventure module H1, *Bloodstone Pass*.

Finally, when Will casts his *fireball* at Demogorgon, he talks of needing to roll a 13 or better on a d20. The *fireball* spell didn't require an attack roll in either the D&D or AD&D of the 1980s, but it's possible the kids had a house rule covering that. And as many fans of the game noted, though there's only one Demogorgon in D&D, he doesn't need a definite article. It's "Demogorgon," not "the Demogorgon."

Still, we can certainly forgive *Stranger Things* its occasional divergence from D&D canon and the odd anachronism, because not only is it a fine show, it stays absolutely true to the spirit of D&D in the 1980s. It's great to hear that the show has been renewed for a second season. Many people are already wondering if "the Demogorgon" will return, and what other golden memories of D&D the show might draw on next time around.



Fifth Edition: Rage of Demons Storyline.(Select to view)

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# Streaming Highlights

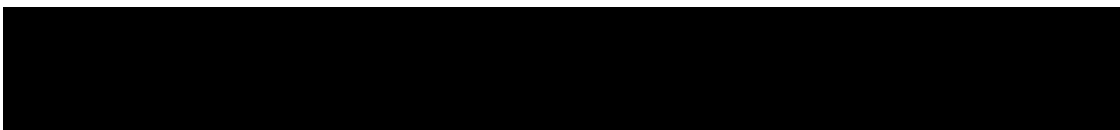
Force Grey: Giant Hunters get set to conclude their epic adventure, Acquisitions Incorporated is live at PAX West, and Ray Villafane reveals some of the secrets of fine-art pumpkin carving.



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## Force Grey: Giant Hunters

Episode 7 is the end of the series, but the finale of their *Storm King's Thunder* adventure is yet to come! Get up to speed by watching Dungeon Master Matthew Mercer guide the story as Utkarsh Ambudkar, Shelby Fero, Ashley Johnson, Brian Posehn, and Jonah Ray battle a fearsome golem and discover the traitor lurking in their midst. If you haven't had a chance to sample Force Grey's adventures, you can catch up on the whole series on the Nerdist YouTube channel. Magic Missile!







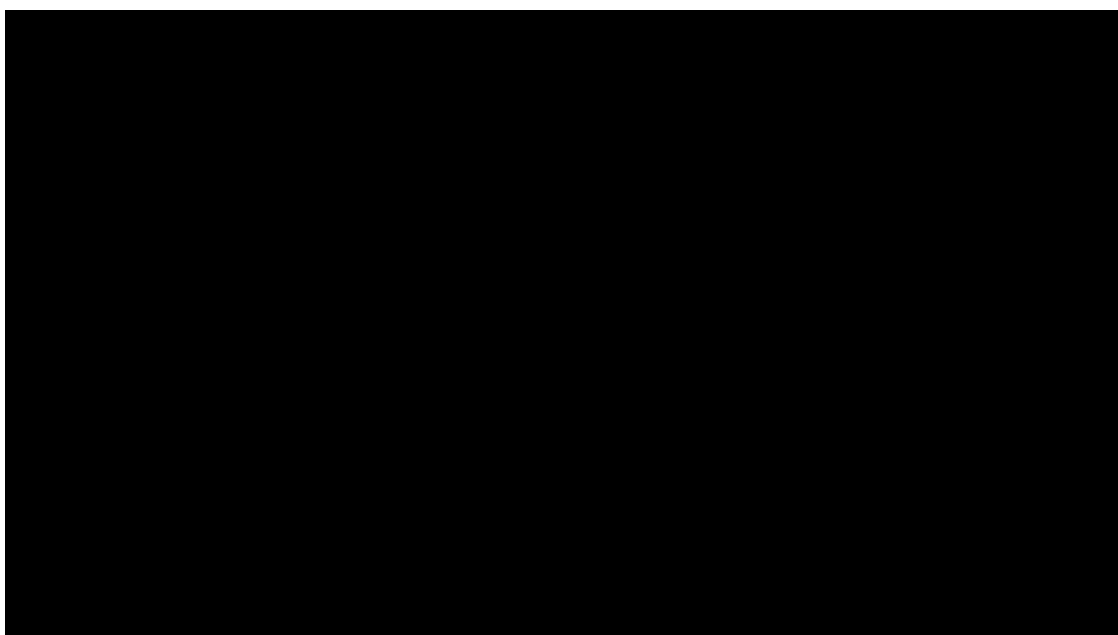
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## Acquisitions Incorporated is live at PAX West

Acquisitions Inc. are back in town for another live adventure under the watchful eye of Dungeon Master extraordinaire Chris Perkins. ( See “ **Dressing the Dungeon Master**” in this issue for the full story on Chris’s amazing costume.) Can Binwin Bronzebottom truly have joined the ranks of the dearly departed? Fortunately, the dwarf has never been one to let mere death hold him back, and it’s not long before our intrepid trio (plus intern Patrick Rothfuss) are heading out on another dangerous mission packed with equal measures of hilarity and profanity!

## PAX West 2016 Animated Intro

“Preciously on Acquisitions Incorporated . . . Wait, that says ‘Previously’ . . .” If you don’t have time to check out the entire Acquisitions Inc. event, you should still watch the amazing animated introduction to this year’s PAX West session, which provides a riotous summary of the group’s adventures from earlier in the year at PAX East. Featuring a daring vault heist, the worst Cyrano de Bergerac impression ever, the contents of Jim Darkmagic, and a showdown with Dran Enterprises at the lair of Isohedrus, this is surely Acquisition Inc.’s finest (animated) hour. (Well, okay, **their finest animated five minutes.**)



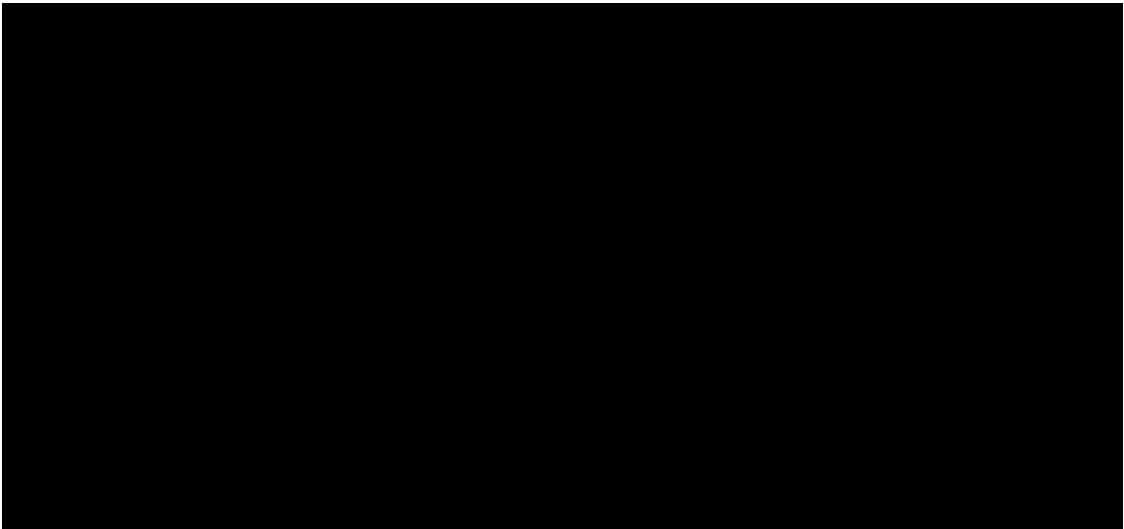
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## Villafane reveals some of the secrets of fine-art pumpkin carving

If you’ve enjoyed our spooky Halloween cover and think you’d like to try pumpkin carving for yourself, why not take some inspiration, hints, and advice from one of the pros? Professional pumpkin artist Ray Villafane is the creator of this issue’s cover (inspired by the hill giant game of “Stuff-Stuff”—see “**Imagining the Ampersand**” in this issue) . You can watch Ray work his carving magic with this video from his YouTube channel.



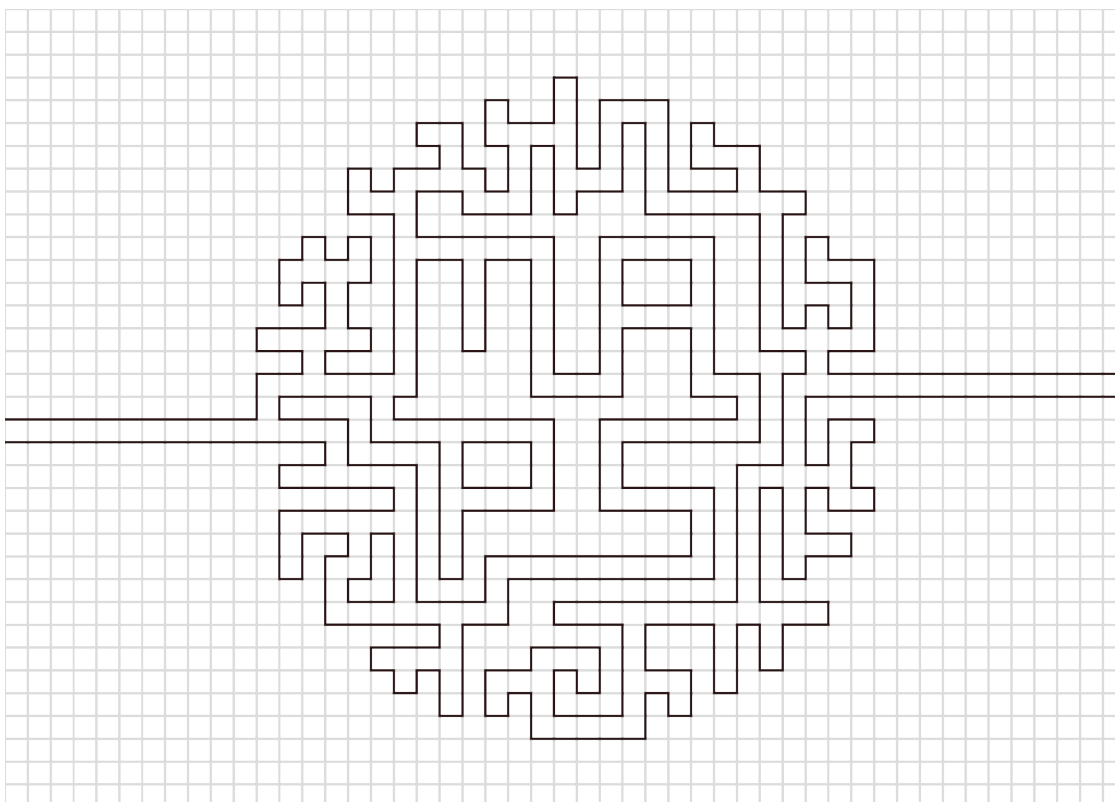




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# Maps of the Month: Curse of Strahd

With Halloween upon us, what better maps to showcase than a selection from Curse of Strahd?



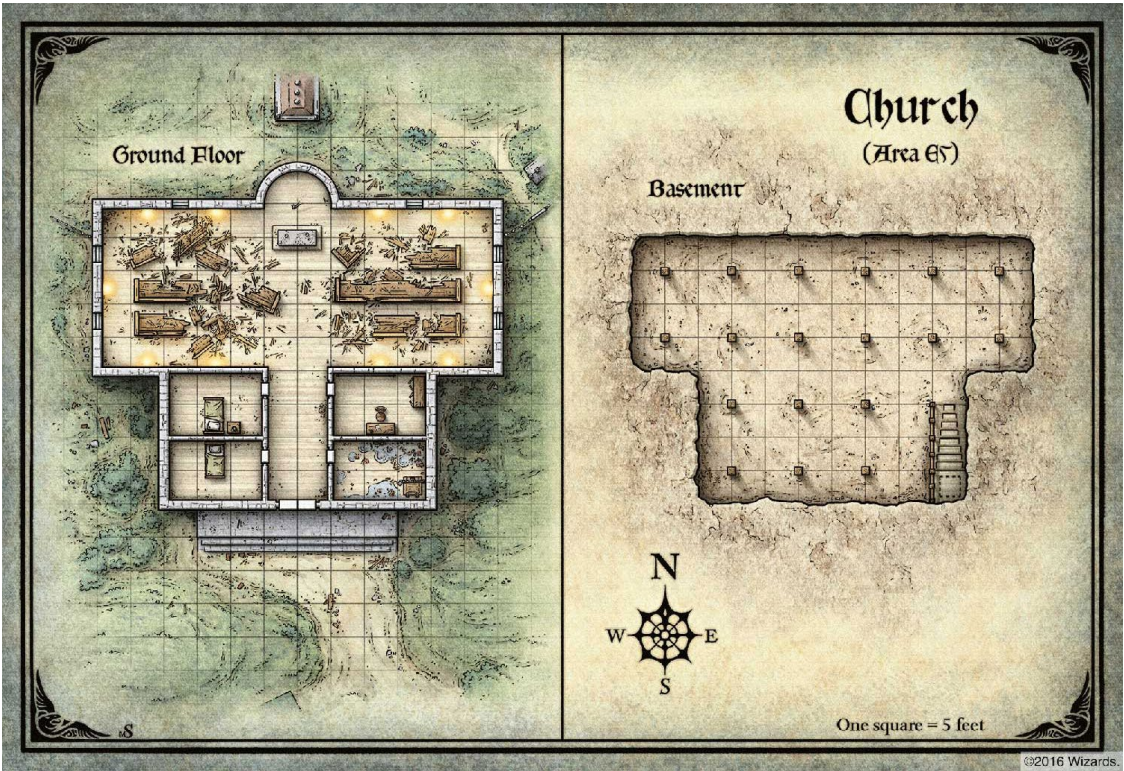
We're pleased to offer the following maps in both tagged and untagged formats for use in your campaigns—whether your players choose to visit a church, a winery, or a coffin makers shop (because adventuring can be a highly dangerous pursuit). We've even included Baba Lysaga's creeping hut as a potential lair for annis hags ([previewed in this issue](#)).

As always, our appreciation goes out to cartographer Mike Schley. To discover more of Mike's work, including prints of these and many more maps for sale, visit his [website](#).

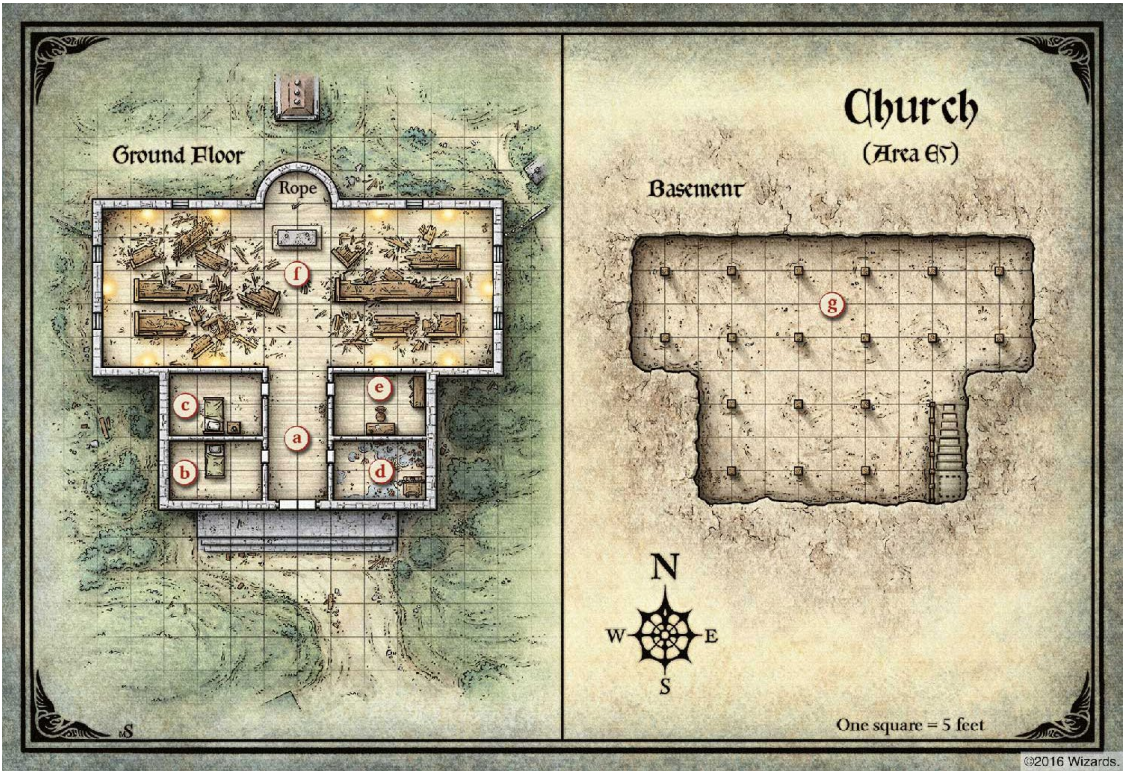
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## The Church





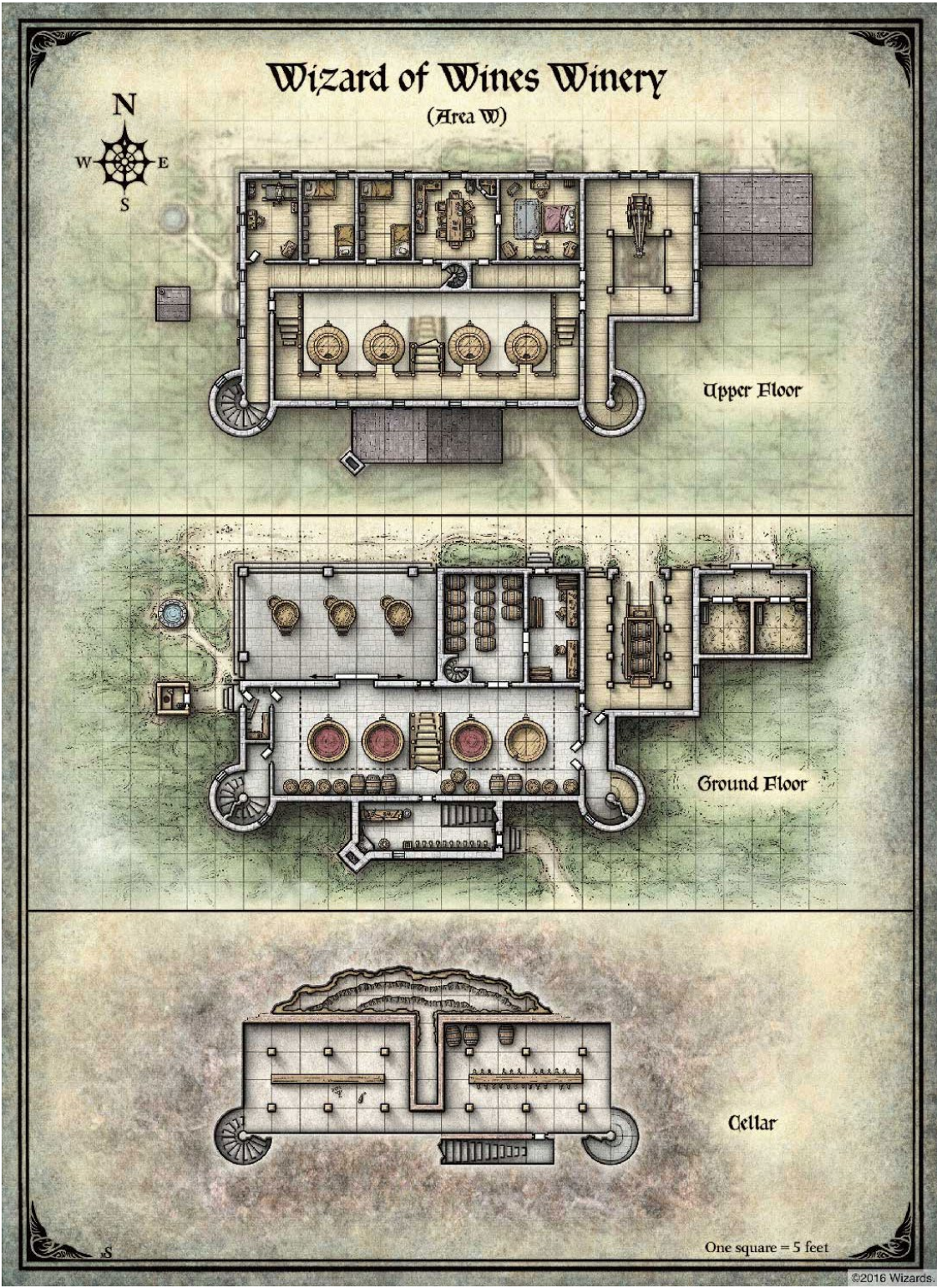
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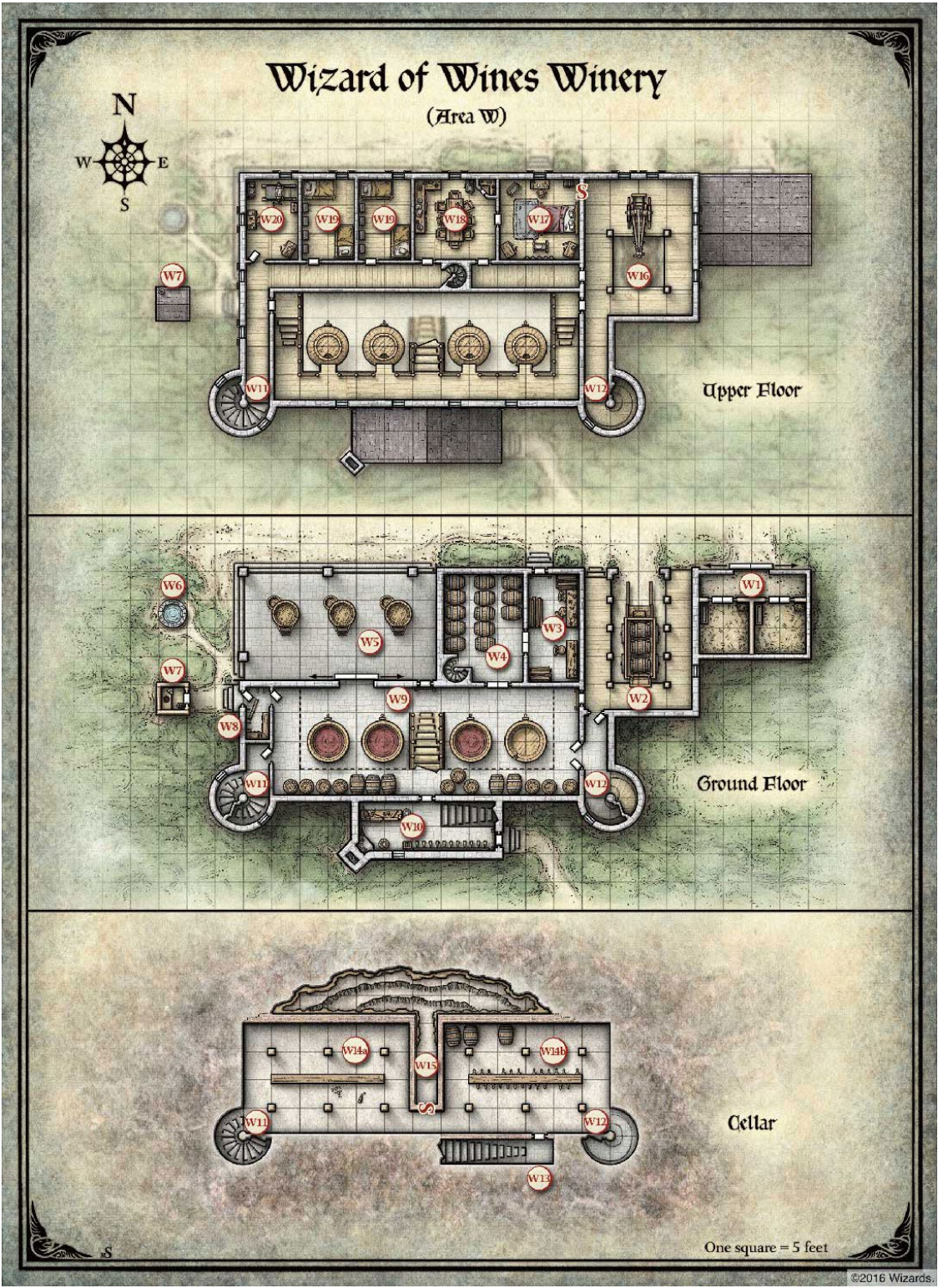
# The Winery





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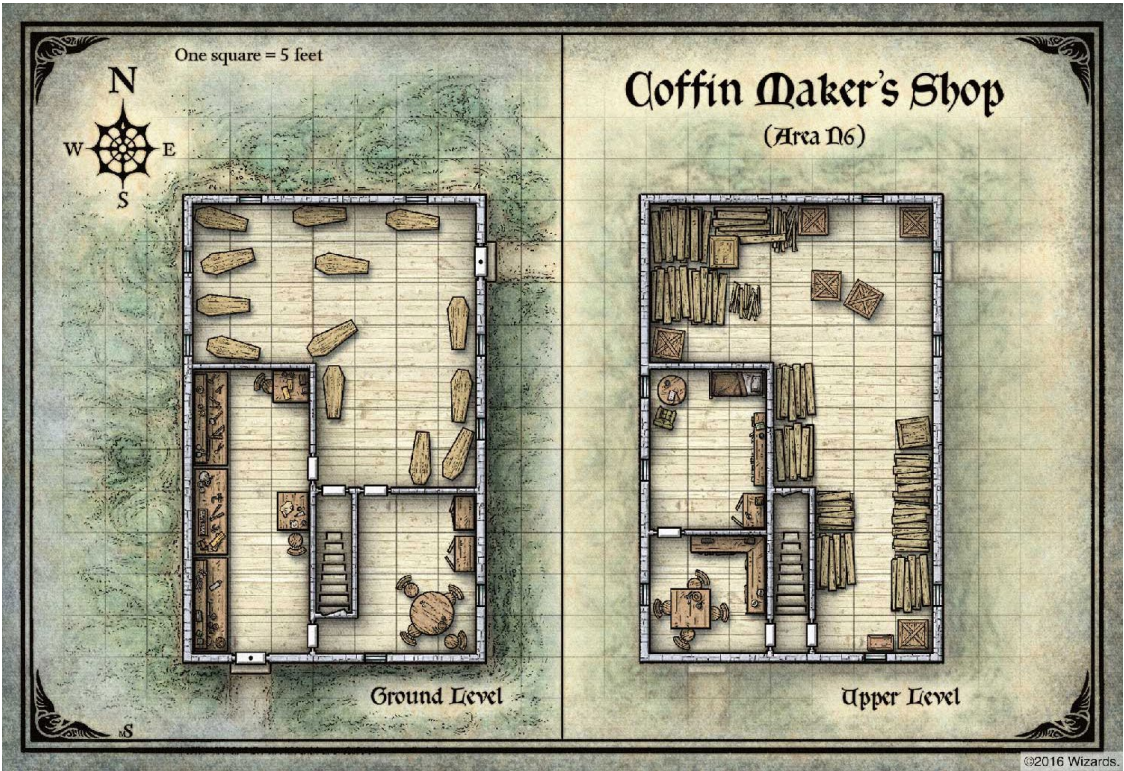




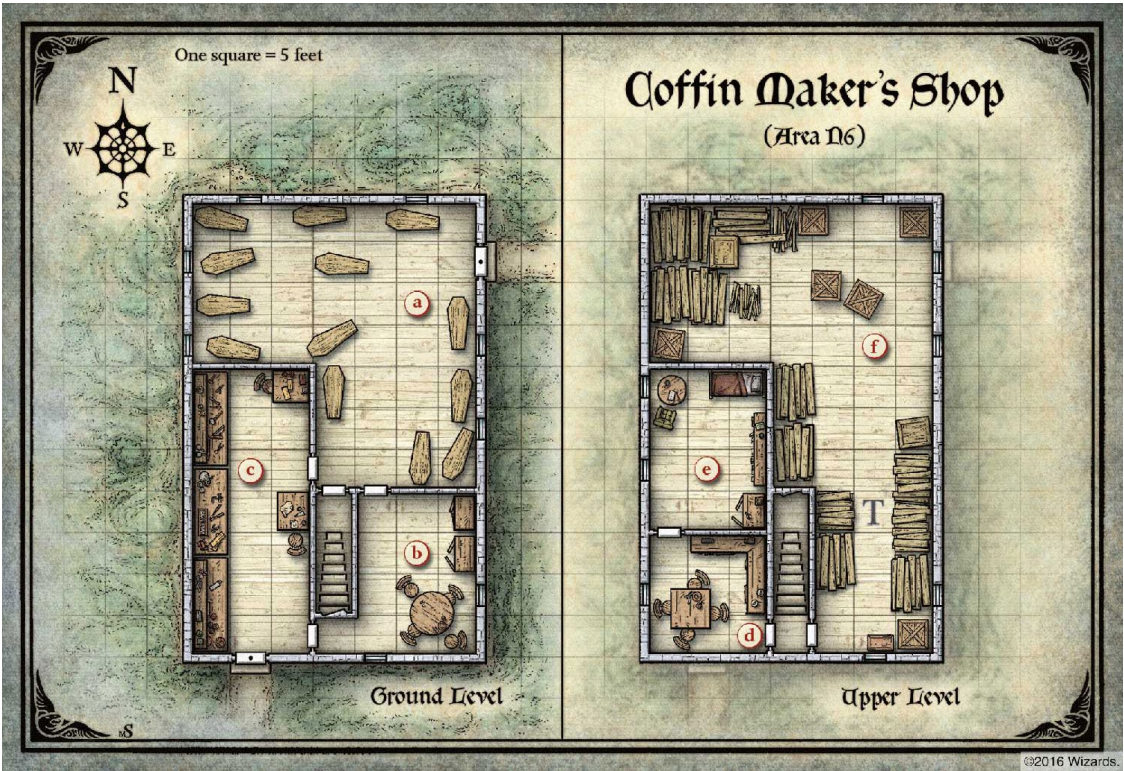
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# The Coffin Makers Shop





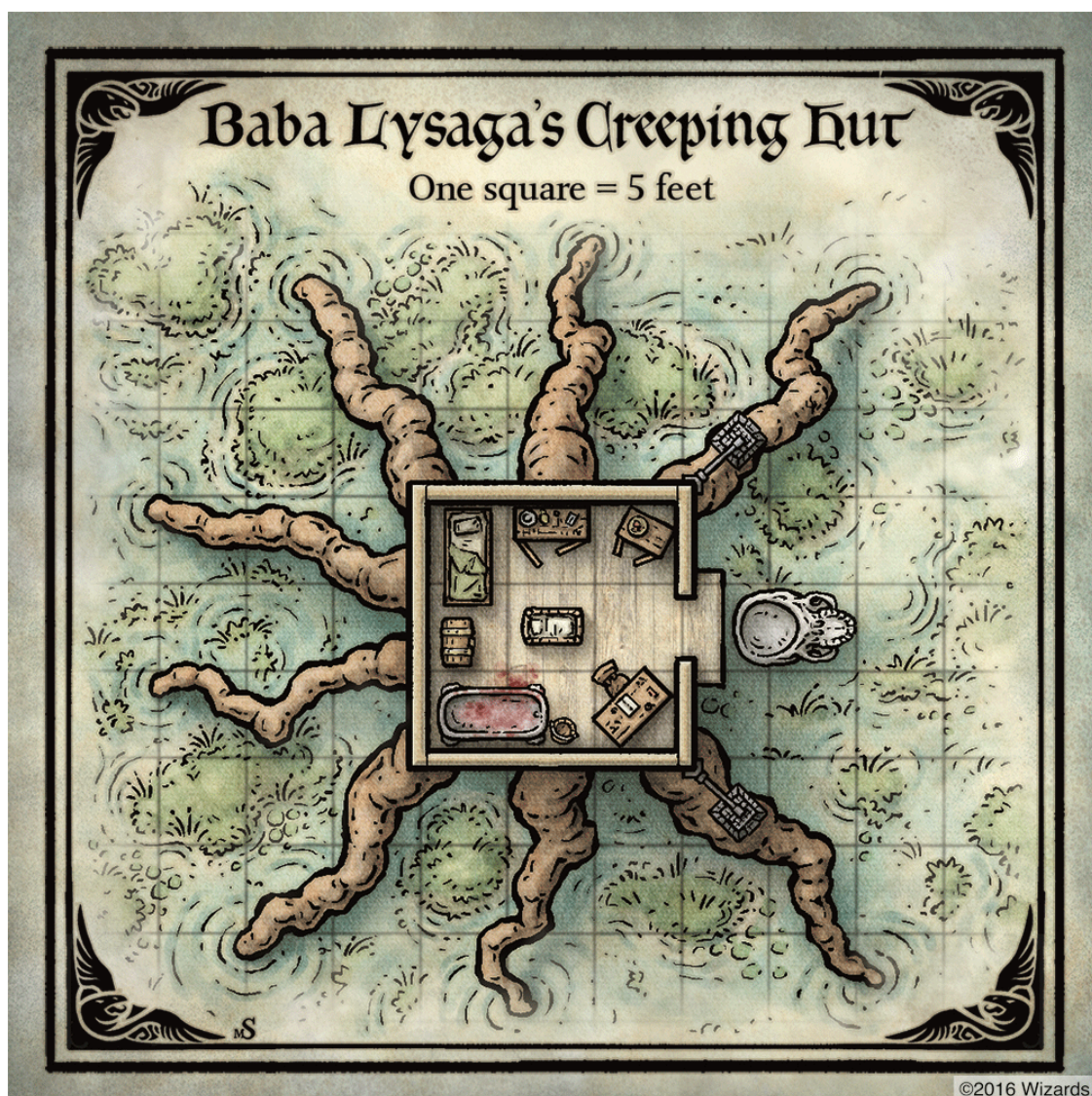
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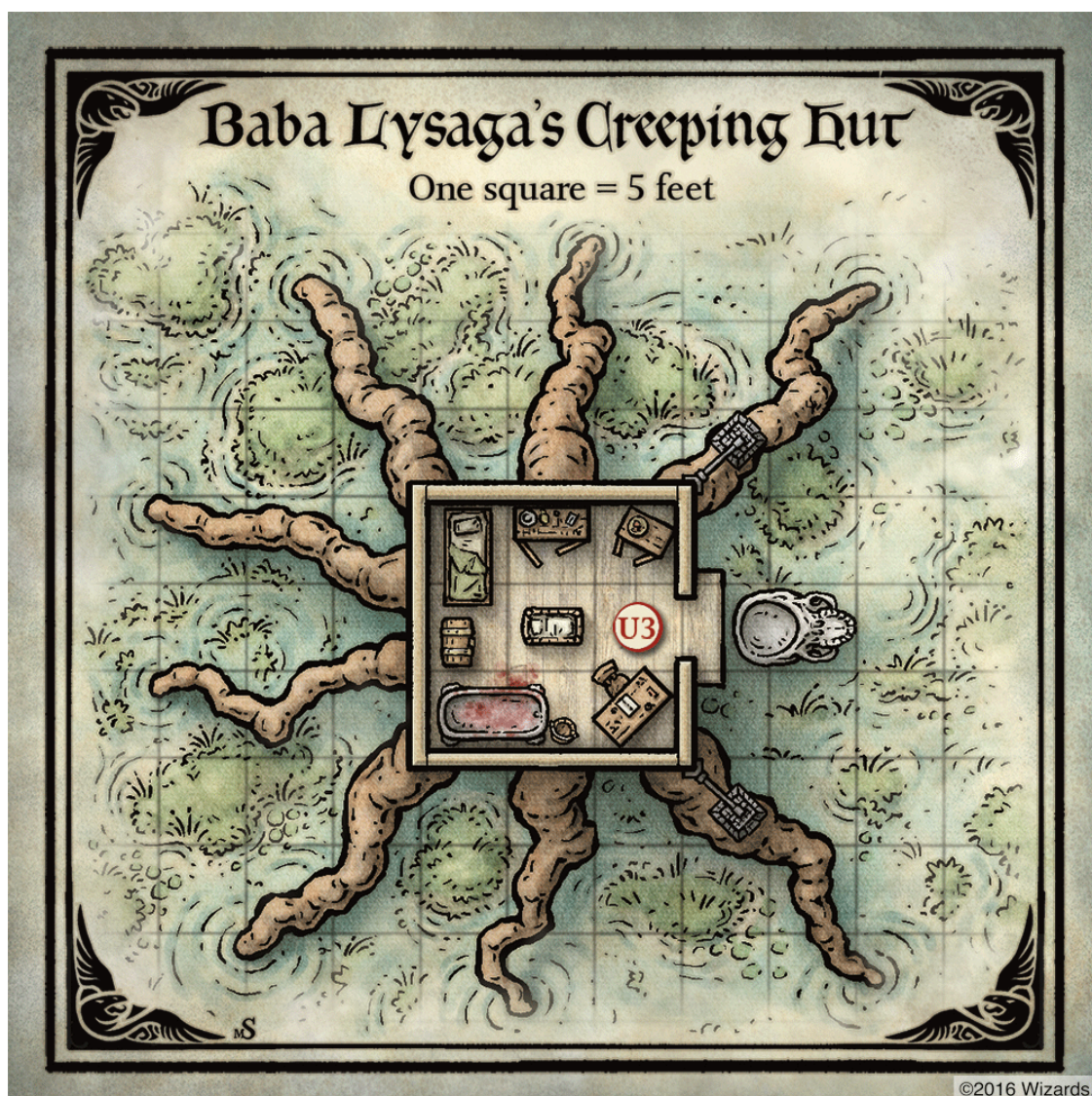
# Baba Lysaga's Creeping Hut





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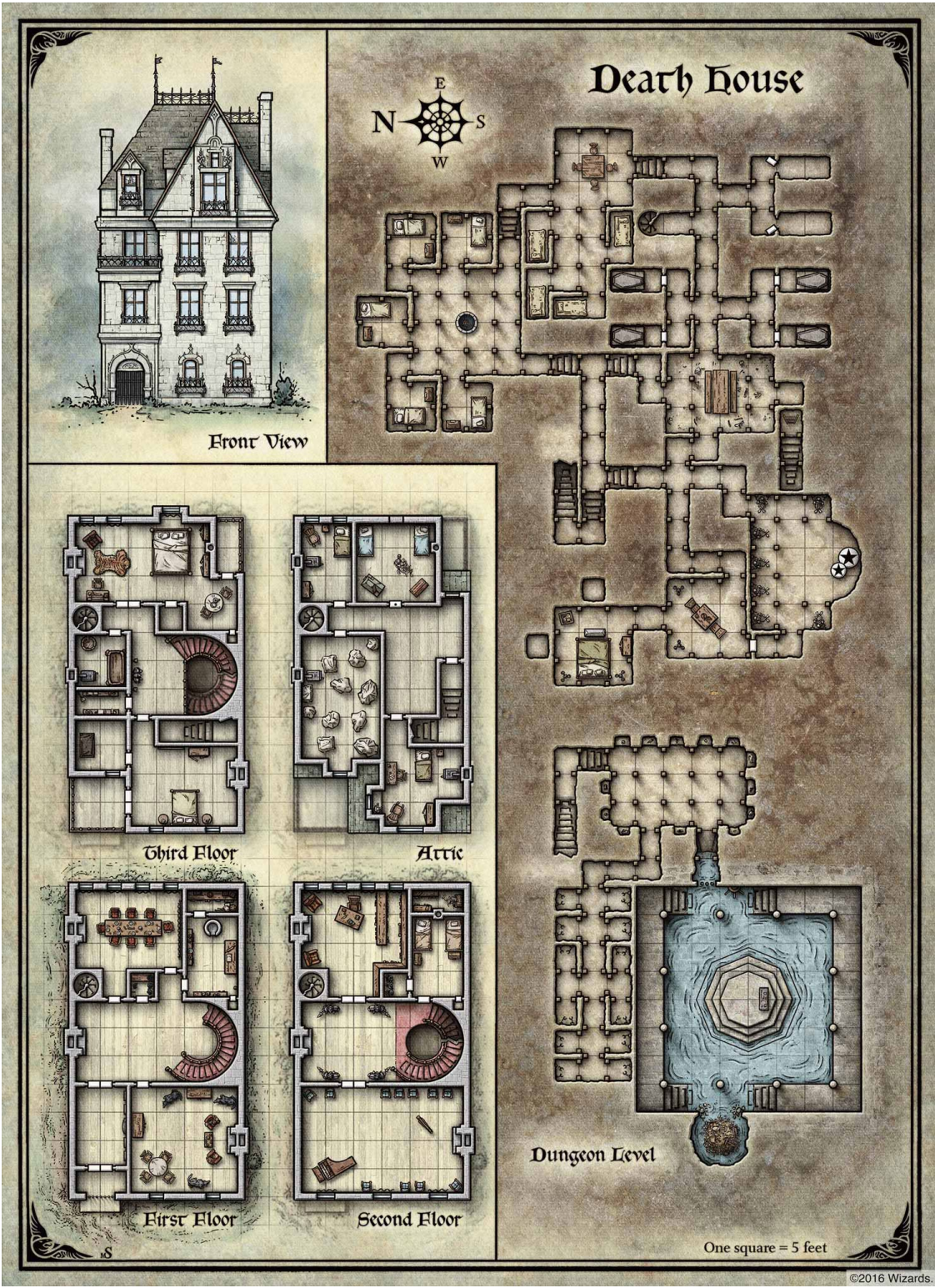


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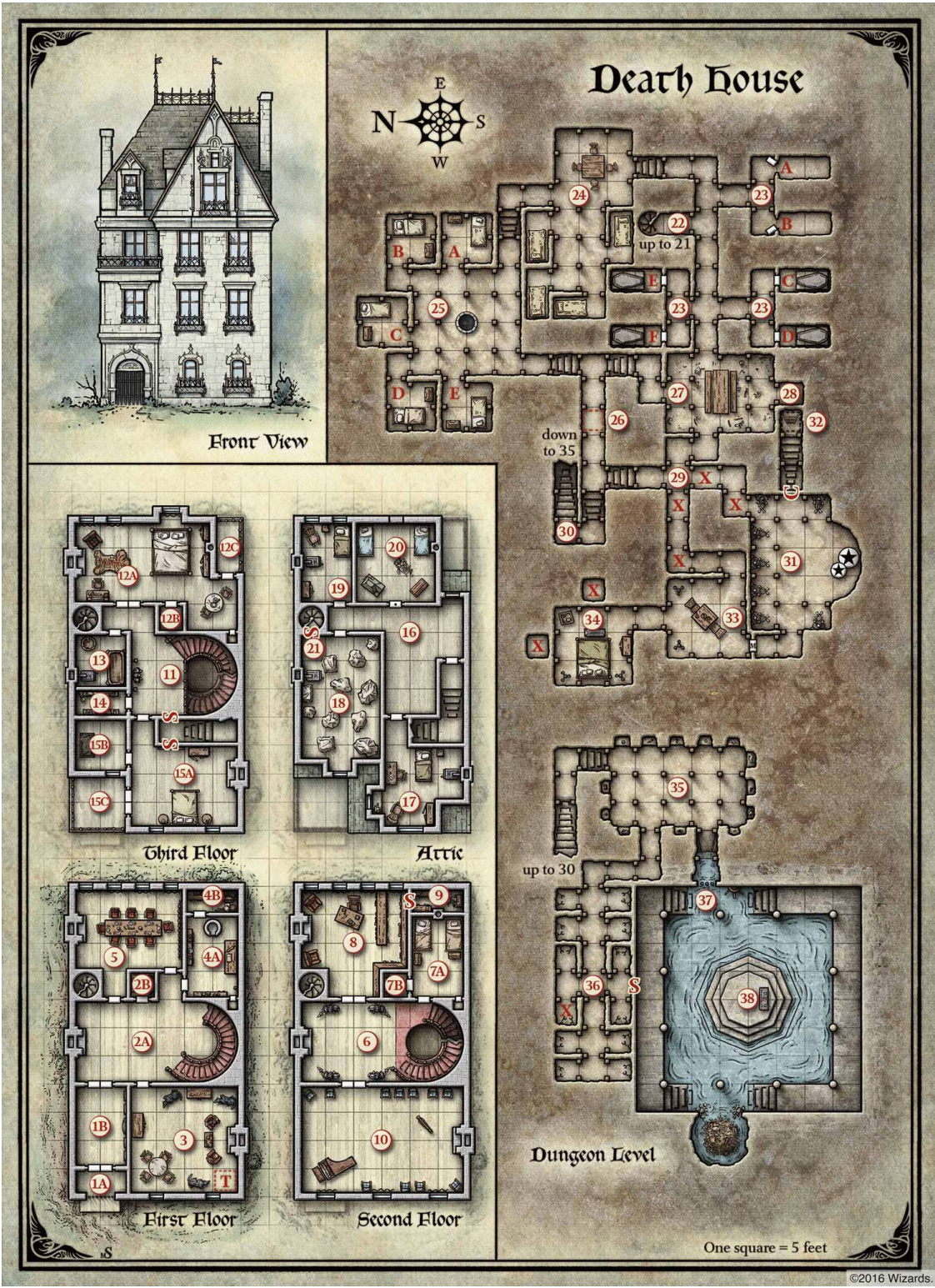
## Death House





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# Unearthed Arcana: The Ranger

Mike Mearls explores new approaches to D&D's ranger class

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**O**ver the past year, you've seen us try a number of new approaches to the ranger, all aimed at addressing the class's high levels of player dissatisfaction and its ranking as D&D's weakest class by a significant margin.

Those two factors combined to put us on the path to this revision. We have classes that rate as weak, but which nonetheless have high levels of player satisfaction. That tells us people playing those classes are happy with how their characters' abilities work and with their own experience at the table, even if those classes aren't the strongest. After all, not every class can rank at the top.

Likewise, most issues we see with classes are confined to specific

abilities that don't play a big role in determining whether players like the class as a whole. In other words, no class is perfect, but each is close enough to the mark in its own way that players are happy.

As such, the ranger's status as a sore spot for players has been a cause for concern for a while. And so, today we present a new revision of the ranger. Though it retains many of the elements of the existing class, a lot has changed, so it's best to simply dig into the new material to get a sense of how it feels. But what I'd like to address here is how the D&D game will evolve in the future.

Any change as dramatic as rebuilding a character class requires planning, verification, and a clear, easy implementation.

The planning phase goes back to our review of playtest feedback. We review data and read anecdotes on Reddit, forums, and social media. We try to decide if addressing the issue is worth the potential disruption to the game.

In this case, we felt that a few factors combined to push for a change. Many players want to play rangers, but few were happy with the class, which held its place at the bottom of class power rankings by a significant margin. The class's individual features also filled the top-ten list of lowest-rated individual character features.

With our course set for a revision, we've spent the past year experimenting and gathering feedback. We believe that if something doesn't hit the mark the first time, we need to take our time and make sure our path to a solution is the right one. So our tinkering with the ranger led us here, to this latest update.

Our next step, which begins now, is verification. Are these fixes correct? Do they solve problems at your table? Do you, as the community of D&D players and DMs, accept them? I expect another revision or two to be made to the class, but I'm confident that the scope and direction of these changes fit in with what the community is looking for.

Finally, we come to implementation. If this iteration of the ranger, or a future revision of it, grades high enough, our plan is to present it as a revised ranger in a future D&D sourcebook. Players can select the original ranger or the revised version, though DMs will always be



free to use only one or the other. Both will be legal for D&D Adventurers League play, and players of existing ranger characters will have the option to swap to the revised version. As you'll see as you read further, the original ranger and the revised class use almost identical progression tables, even if the specifics of some features differ. With a little work on our end, we can ensure that any new ranger options we provide work for both classes.

Overall, this approach captures our intent—fix what needs to be fixed when it's necessary to do so, but in a way that minimizes disruption and maximizes player satisfaction. With that in mind, take a look at our new ranger and keep an eye out for the feedback survey to follow.

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## Class Features

As a ranger, you gain the following class features.

### Hit Points

**Hit Dice:** 1d10 per ranger level

**Hit Points at 1st Level:** 10 + your Constitution modifier

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per ranger level after 1st

### Proficiencies

**Armor:** Light armor, medium armor, shields

**Weapons:** Simple weapons, martial weapons

**Tools:** None

**Saving Throws:** Strength, Dexterity

**Skills:** Choose three from Animal Handling, Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, and Survival

### Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) scale mail or (b) leather armor
- (a) two shortswords or (b) two simple melee weapons
- (a) a dungeoneer’s pack or (b) an explorer’s pack
- A longbow and a quiver of 20 arrows

Favored Enemy

Beginning at 1st level, you have significant experience studying, tracking, hunting, and even talking to a certain type of enemy commonly encountered in the wilds.

Choose a type of favored enemy: beasts, fey, humanoids, monstrosities, or undead. You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with weapon attacks against creatures of the chosen type. Additionally, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track your favored enemies, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

When you gain this feature, you also learn one language of your choice, typically one spoken by your favored enemy or creatures associated with it. However, you are free to pick any language you wish to learn.

The Ranger

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Favored Enemy, Natural Explorer
2nd	+2	Fighting Style, Spellcasting
3rd	+2	Primeval Awareness, Ranger Conclave
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5th	+3	Ranger Conclave feature
6th	+3	Greater Favored Enemy



6th	+3	Greater Favored Enemy
7th	+3	Ranger Conclave feature
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement, Fleet of Foot
9th	+4	—
10th	+4	Hide in Plain Sight
11th	+4	Ranger Conclave feature
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	—
14th	+5	Vanish
15th	+5	Ranger Conclave feature
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	—
18th	+6	Feral Senses
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	Foe Slayer

— Spell Slots per Spell Level —						
Level	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	2	2	—	—	—	—
3rd	3	3	—	—	—	—
4th	4	4	—	—	—	—

4th	3	3	—	—	—	—
5th	4	4	2	—	—	—
6th	4	4	2	—	—	—
7th	5	4	3	—	—	—
8th	5	4	3	—	—	—
9th	6	4	3	2	—	—
10th	6	4	3	2	—	—
11th	7	4	3	3	—	—
12th	7	4	3	3	—	—
13th	8	4	3	3	1	—
14th	8	4	3	3	1	—
15th	9	4	3	3	2	—
16th	9	4	3	3	2	—
17th	10	4	3	3	3	1
18th	10	4	3	3	3	1
19th	11	4	3	3	3	2
20th	11	4	3	3	3	2

Natural Explorer

You are a master of navigating the natural world, and you react with swift and decisive action when attacked. This grants you the following benefits:

- You ignore difficult terrain.
- You have advantage on initiative rolls.
- On your first turn during combat, you have advantage on attack



rolls against creatures that have not yet acted.

In addition, you are skilled at navigating the wilderness. You gain the following benefits when traveling for an hour or more:

- Difficult terrain doesn't slow your group's travel.
- Your group can't become lost except by magical means.
- Even when you are engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), you remain alert to danger.
- If you are traveling alone, you can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- When you forage, you find twice as much food as you normally would.
- While tracking other creatures, you also learn their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

---

### Fighting Style

At 2nd level, you adopt a particular style of fighting as your specialty. Choose one of the following options. You can't take a Fighting Style option more than once, even if you later get to choose again.

#### Archery

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls you make with ranged weapons.

#### Defense

While you are wearing armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

#### Dueling

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

#### Two-Weapon Fighting

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

---

### Spellcasting

By the time you reach 2nd level, you have learned to use the magical essence of nature to cast spells, much as a druid does. See chapter 10

for the general rules of spellcasting and chapter 11 for the ranger spell list.

### Spell Slots

The Ranger table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

For example, if you know the 1st-level spell animal friendship and have a 1st-level and a 2nd-level spell slot available, you can cast animal friendship using either slot.

### Spells Known of 1st Level and Higher

You know two 1st-level spells of your choice from the ranger spell list.

The Spells Known column of the Ranger table shows when you learn more ranger spells of your choice. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For instance, when you reach 5th level in this class, you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the ranger spells you know and replace it with another spell from the ranger spell list, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

### Spellcasting Ability

Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for your ranger spells, since your magic draws on your attunement to nature. You use your Wisdom whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Wisdom modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a ranger spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

**Spell save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

**Spell attack modifier** = your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

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### Primeval Awareness

Beginning at 3rd level, your mastery of ranger lore allows you to



establish a powerful link to beasts and to the land around you.

You have an innate ability to communicate with beasts, and they recognize you as a kindred spirit. Through sounds and gestures, you can communicate simple ideas to a beast as an action, and can read its basic mood and intent. You learn its emotional state, whether it is affected by magic of any sort, its short-term needs (such as food or safety), and actions you can take (if any) to persuade it to not attack.

You cannot use this ability against a creature that you have attacked within the past 10 minutes.

Additionally, you can attune your senses to determine if any of your favored enemies lurk nearby. By spending 1 uninterrupted minute in concentration (as if you were concentrating on a spell), you can sense whether any of your favored enemies are present within 5 miles of you. This feature reveals which of your favored enemies are present, their numbers, and the creatures' general direction and distance (in miles) from you.

If there are multiple groups of your favored enemies within range, you learn this information for each group.

---

### Ranger Conclave

At 3rd level, you choose to emulate the ideals and training of a ranger conclave: the Beast Conclave, the Hunter Conclave, or the Stalker Conclave, all detailed at the end of the class description. Your choice grants you features at 3rd level and again at 5th, 7th, 11th, and 15th level.

---

### Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

---

### Greater Favored Enemy

At 6th level, you are ready to hunt even deadlier game. Choose a type of greater favored enemy: aberrations, celestials, constructs, dragons, elementals, fiends, or giants. You gain all the benefits against this

chosen enemy that you normally gain against your favored enemy, including an additional language. Your bonus to damage rolls against all your favored enemies increases to +4.

Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against the spells and abilities used by a greater favored enemy.

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### Fleet of Foot

Beginning at 8th level, you can use the Dash action as a bonus action on your turn.

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### Hide in Plain Sight

Starting at 10th level, you can remain perfectly still for long periods of time to set up ambushes.

When you attempt to hide on your turn, you can opt to not move on that turn. If you avoid moving, creatures that attempt to detect you take a –10 penalty to their Wisdom (Perception) checks until the start of your next turn. You lose this benefit if you move or fall prone, either ©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC 5 voluntarily or because of some external effect. You are still automatically detected if any effect or action causes you to no longer be hidden. If you are still hidden on your next turn, you can continue to remain motionless and gain this benefit until you are detected.

---

### Feral Senses

At 18th level, you gain preternatural senses that help you fight creatures you can't see. When you attack a creature you can't see, your inability to see it doesn't impose disadvantage on your attack rolls against it.

You are also aware of the location of any invisible creature within 30 feet of you, provided that the creature isn't hidden from you and you aren't blinded or deafened.

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### Foe Slayer

At 20th level, you become an unparalleled hunter. Once on each of your turns, you can add your Wisdom modifier to the attack roll or the damage roll of an attack you make. You can choose to use this



feature before or after the roll, but before any effects of the roll are applied.

### Ranger Conclaves

Across the wilds, rangers come together to form conclaves—loose associations whose members share a similar outlook on how best to protect nature from those who would despoil it.

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### Beast Conclave

Many rangers are more at home in the wilds than in civilization, to the point where animals consider them kin. Rangers of the Beast Conclave develop a close bond with a beast, then further strengthen that bond through the use of magic.

### Animal Companion

At 3rd level, you learn to use your magic to create a powerful bond with a creature of the natural world.

With 8 hours of work and the expenditure of 50 gp worth of rare herbs and fine food, you call forth an animal from the wilderness to serve as your faithful companion. You normally select your companion from among the following animals: an ape, a black bear, a boar, a giant badger, a giant weasel, a mule, a panther, or a wolf. However, your DM might pick one of these animals for you, based on the surrounding terrain and on what types of creatures would logically be present in the area.

At the end of the 8 hours, your animal companion appears and gains all the benefits of your Companion's Bond ability. You can have only one animal companion at a time.

If your animal companion is ever slain, the magical bond you share allows you to return it to life. With 8 hours of work and the expenditure of 25 gp worth of rare herbs and fine food, you call forth your companion's spirit and use your magic to create a new body for it. You can return an animal companion to life in this manner even if you do not possess any part of its body.

If you use this ability to return a former animal companion to life while you have a current animal companion, your current companion leaves you and is replaced by the restored companion.

## Companion's Bond

Your animal companion gains a variety of benefits while it is linked to you.

The animal companion loses its Multiattack action, if it has one.

The companion obeys your commands as best it can. It rolls for initiative like any other creature, but you determine its actions, decisions, attitudes, and so on. If you are incapacitated or absent, your companion acts on its own.

When using your Natural Explorer feature, you and your animal companion can both move stealthily at a normal pace.

## Keeping Track of Proficiency

When you gain your animal companion at 3rd level, its proficiency bonus matches yours at +2. As you gain levels and increase your proficiency bonus, remember that your companion's proficiency bonus improves as well, and is applied to the following areas: Armor Class, skills, saving throws, attack bonus, and damage rolls.

Your animal companion has abilities and game statistics determined in part by your level. Your companion uses your proficiency bonus rather than its own. In addition to the areas where it normally uses its proficiency bonus, an animal companion also adds its proficiency bonus to its AC and to its damage rolls.

## Expanding Companion Options

Depending on the nature of your campaign, the DM might choose to expand the options for your animal companion. As a rule of thumb, a beast can serve as an animal companion if it is Medium or smaller, has 15 or fewer hit points, and cannot deal more than 8 damage with a single attack. In general, that applies to creatures with a challenge rating of 1/4 or less, but there are exceptions.

Your animal companion gains proficiency in two skills of your choice. It also becomes proficient with all saving throws.

For each level you gain after 3rd, your animal companion gains an additional hit die and increases its hit points accordingly.

Whenever you gain the Ability Score Improvement class feature, your companion's abilities also improve. Your companion can



increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or it can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, your companion can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature unless its description specifies otherwise.

Your companion shares your alignment, and has a personality trait and a flaw that you can roll for or select from the tables below. Your companion shares your ideal, and its bond is always, "The ranger who travels with me is a beloved companion for whom I would gladly give my life."

#### Why No Multiattack?

Multiattack is a useful design tool that keeps monsters simple for the DM. It provides a boost in offense, but that boost is meant to make a beast threatening for one battle—a notion that doesn't mesh well with a beast intended to fight with the party, rather than against it. Project Multiattack across an entire adventure, and an animal companion runs the risk of outclassing the fighters and barbarians in the party. So in story terms, your animal companion has traded in some of its ferocity (in the form of Multiattack) for better awareness and the ability to fight more effectively in concert with you.

Your animal companion gains the benefits of your Favored Enemy feature, and of your Greater Favored Enemy feature when you gain that feature at 6th level. It uses the favored enemies you selected for those features.

#### d6 Trait

1. I'm dauntless in the face of adversity.
2. Threaten my friends, threaten me.
3. I stay on alert so others can rest.
4. People see an animal and underestimate me. I use that to my advantage.
5. I have a knack for showing up in the nick of time.
6. I put my friends' needs before my own in all things.

#### d6 Flaw

1. If there's food left unattended, I'll eat it.
2. I growl at strangers, and all people except my ranger are strangers to me.

3. Any time is a good time for a belly rub.
4. I'm deathly afraid of water.
5. My idea of hello is a flurry of licks to the face.
6. I jump on creatures to tell them how much I love them.

### Coordinated Attack

Beginning at 5th level, you and your animal companion form a more potent fighting team. When you use the Attack action on your turn, if your companion can see you, it can use its reaction to make a melee attack.

### Beast's Defense

At 7th level, while your companion can see you, it has advantage on all saving throws.

### Storm F Claws And Fangs

At 11th level, your companion can use its action to make a melee attack against each creature of its choice within 5 feet of it, with a separate attack roll for each target.

### Superior Beast's Defense

At 15th level, whenever an attacker that your companion can see hits it with an attack, it can use its reaction to halve the attack's damage against it.

---

### Hunter Conclave

Some rangers seek to master weapons to better protect civilization from the terrors of the wilderness. Members of the Hunter Conclave learn specialized fighting techniques for use against the most dire threats, from rampaging ogres and hordes of orcs to towering giants and terrifying dragons.

### Hunter's Prey

At 3rd level, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

***Colossus Slayer.*** Your tenacity can wear down the most potent foes. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum. You can deal this extra damage only once per turn.

***Giant Killer.*** When a Large or larger creature within 5 feet of you



hits or misses you with an attack, you can use your reaction to attack that creature immediately after its attack, provided that you can see the creature.

***Horde Breaker.*** Once on each of your turns when you make a weapon attack, you can make another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of your weapon.

#### Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

#### Defensive Tactics

At 7th level, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

***Escape the Horde.*** Opportunity attacks against you are made with disadvantage.

***Multiattack Defense.*** When a creature hits you with an attack, you gain a +4 bonus to AC against all subsequent attacks made by that creature for the rest of the turn.

***Steel Will.*** You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

#### Multiattack

At 11th level, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

***Volley.*** You can use your action to make a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 10 feet of a point you can see within your weapon's range. You must have ammunition for each target, as normal, and you make a separate attack roll for each target.

***Whirlwind Attack.*** You can use your action to make melee attacks against any number of creatures within 5 feet of you, with a separate attack roll for each target.

#### Superior Hunter's Defense

At 15th level, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

***Evasion.*** When you are subjected to an effect, such as a red dragon's fiery breath or a lightning bolt spell, that allows you to make a

Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on a saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

***Stand Against the Tide.*** When a hostile creature misses you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to force that creature to repeat the same attack against another creature (other than itself) of your choice.

***Uncanny Dodge.*** When an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you.

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### Deep Stalker Conclave

Most folk descend into the depths of the Underdark only under the most pressing conditions, undertaking some desperate quest or following the promise of vast riches. All too often, evil festers beneath the earth unnoticed, and rangers of the Deep Stalker Conclave strive to uncover and defeat such threats before they can reach the surface.

### Underdark Scout

At 3rd level, you master the art of the ambush. On your first turn during combat, you gain a +10 bonus to your speed, and if you use the Attack action, you can make one additional attack. You are also adept at evading creatures that rely on darkvision. Such creatures gain no benefit when attempting to detect you in dark and dim conditions. Additionally, when the DM determines if you can hide from a creature, that creature gains no benefit from its darkvision.

### Deep Stalker Magic

At 3rd level, you gain darkvision out to a range of 90 feet. If you already have darkvision, you increase its range by 30 feet. You also gain access to additional spells at 3rd, 5th, 9th, 13th, and 15th level. Once you gain a deep stalker spell, it counts as a ranger spell for you but doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

### Level Spells

3rd	<i>disguise self</i>
5th	<i>rope trick</i>



<b>9th</b>	<i>glyph of warding</i>
<b>13th</b>	<i>greater invisibility</i>
<b>17th</b>	<i>seeming</i>

### Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

### Iron Mind

At 7th level, you gain proficiency in Wisdom saving throws.

### Stalker's Flurry

Starting at 11th level, once on each of your turns when you miss with an attack, you can make another attack.

### Stalker's Dodge

At 15th level, whenever a creature attacks you and does not have advantage, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the creature's attack roll against you. You can use this feature before or after the attack roll is made, but it must be used before the outcome of the roll is determined.

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To see the full treasure trove of Unearthed Arcana articles, covering new classes and feats, conversions of rules from previous editions, and much more, visit the [archive here](#).

Have a request for Unearthed Arcana? Follow [@mikemearls](#) on Twitter and let him know.



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# Comic: Storm Kings Thunder

## Hold of the Storm Giants

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**L**ast month, Jason Thompson walked us through the Hall of the Fire Giant King. Yet the fight against the giants has not ended! This month, we continue with a look inside the Hold of the Storm Giants, from Storm King's Thunder....



230-HP giants at 1300 P.S.I. Only the greatest heroes dare to brave...

# STORM KING'S THUNDER

## HOLD OF THE STORM GIANTS

A Dungeons & Dragons adventure for levels 1-10  
by Christopher Perkins, Jenna Holland,  
Adam Lee and Richard Whitters

**START**

Well! Our sea off contacts failed to mention the giant whirlpool guarding the storm giant lair!  
The Apparatus of Iwastish only fits two wizards! But by Hayaan, girl of courage, we'll survive this!

**FINISH**

Don't give up and we'll survive this madstrom, O fighter, cleric, bard, revved ranger, druid and—!!!! ROGUES! STOP NEW CHARACTERS!!!

**1** THIRDFLOOR, DRAGON WARSHIP, BLOOD FEET UNDERWATER, DESTROYING KILLERS' BLOOD OF BLOOD, AND KILLING EVERYONE ONCE BELOW RITE LEVEL.

**2** BELOW BLOOD FEET, WIZARDS' APPARATUS OF ILLUMINATION SPINNING, LARVA, WIZARDS' TAILMANS ARE SIZED UP AS IF BY HIGH-PRESSURE WATER-SET CUTTERS. WIZARDS ABANDON SHIP IN OCEAN'S RESURGENT FEMINE.

**3** MORE GUARDS! CLERIC TIES TO PARLAY, BUT KILLER WHALE, ANGRY AT HAVING HAD TO PERFORM TRICKS FOR THE GIANTS, SONS MURDER BRUTALLY. WIZARD DISCOVERS GUNNY INJECT SPELLS ALSO WORKS TO MAKE GIANT LOBBERS.

**4** USING THE STONE OF ELEMENTAL SUMMONING, HALLING AND ONOME ASK EARTH ELEMENTAL, AND BRING BACK ANTIMONY OF VALLEY. BUT WITHIN GIANT-HEARD, SWEETLY AND MORE DISTURBINGLY, BLOOD LIBS OF SECOND-GRADE BONES VULNERABLE FERTILIZER.

**5** BREAKING AHEAD TO LOOK FOR PRISONERS, FINALLY A TEMPOSCOPIC AND A RIVER, ONOME AND HALLING FIND A BLOCKED PASSAGE IN THE TEMPLE OF STORMKING!

**6** STOPPING FOR RATIONS, CLERIC, DRUID AND PALADIN, PERHAPS THAT THE STORM GIANTS CAN COOK SINCE THEY LIVE UNDERWATER AND CAN'T START FIRES, WIZARD #2 SUGGESTS THEY SEARCH FOOD WITH LIGHTNING, THUNDER, ACID, RADIANT OR NECROTIC DAMAGE. THE DEBATE RAGES.

**7** ADVENTURERS CLIMB STAIRS AND FIND BEAST DOOR TO GIANT'S ANCHOR. FIGHTER AND PALADIN ARE AWED BY GIANT WAREHOUSE INVOCES. TIDEWORM, BLOODWIND, NERVENARCH, GUARDIANS, AND THE DOOR OF KILL-MAKING FOR OCEANIC.

**8** SEA ROVER EATS WIZARD #1.

**9** ONOME AND HALLING DISCOVER THEIR AERIALITY. THUNDERWORKS ONCE, BUT THEY DID THEY WILL COME BACK IN NEW BODIES OF APPROXIMATELY EQUAL POWER (PROBABLY PRISONERS).

**10** DRUID USES PLANT GROWTH TO THE GIANT GUARD IN FIELD, GETTING AN GIANTS ARE ENIG, CLERIC, DRUID AND PALADIN ARE OVER WHAT TO DO WITH THE CAPTIVE, BUT VENDOR, WALE KILLS HER WITH "STORM OF CLAWS AND FANGS."

**11** STORM GIANTS—PREPARE OUR ARMY OF CONQUEST!  
Upon the opening gate and show them a surface storm giant can be by (Other, like they're not getting).

**12** WIZARD #2 FIND BLOOD GIANT CLAM AND FIND A FINE BLOOD GIANT. BLOOD ON THE MASTHEAD OF THE VESSEL'S CANT INVADION. THE VESSEL'S CANT INVADION. THE VESSEL'S CANT INVADION.

**13** ONOME ROGUE PROVES HIMSELF BRAVER IN THE PARTY FINDING LOGS OF IN JEWELS IN SEA ANEMONE'S COLENTENTION.

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**15** ADVENTURERS DISCOVER TWO STORM GIANTS SLEEPING IN A HALL TO KEEP FROM SLEEPING. ANEMONE NOTICALLY FROM THE VIBRATIONS OF THE PARTY'S GUT. HALLING, CLERIC OF MYSTRA FINDS SMOOT STORM GIANT ROCKS SHAKING PRESENT INTEREST IN SALMON HATCHERIES.

**16** HALLING TROCKSTER BEHEARS KILLER WHALE BY SCRATCHING ITS BELLY WITH NERVE HAND.

**17** FIGHTER STANDING ON PALADIN'S SHOULDER IS JUST TALL ENOUGH TO SPEAK GUNTY TOGS. CLERIC OF MYSTRA FINDS SMOOT STORM GIANT ROCKS SHAKING PRESENT INTEREST IN SALMON HATCHERIES.

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**21** WIZARD #2 DISGONES OF WALE & CRCA WHILE DRUID AND HALLING ARE DISTRACTED. FIRE OF ANEMONE, HERDERS SPIRIT TO THUNDER ROOM AND BEEG GERSSA TO STOP THE GIANT WAVING. SEEING THAT HALLING IS WEARING HER DEAD MOTHER'S NECKLACE AS A SHAWL, GERSSA STOPS LISTENING & BECOMES WORTH.

**22** WIZARD #2 IS TRIPLE-SERAPED ON GIANT'S TRIDENT. WIZARD #2 LIVES TELLINGUS TO STRA, GERSSA'S MADE KEEPER WHILE SHE STAYS ON THE MYSTICAL TUBING, CAUSING HER TO BECOME PARALYZED.

**23** TO MURDER SURPRISE, YIMBETH WINS OUT BEHINDS HEART. THEN BURNS THROUGH THE DOORS TO THE NORTH, SHOUTING THAT THE PERFOCUS SMALL FOLK KILLED GERSSA.

**24** ONOME ROGUE SLUNG INTO THE AIR, CRASHES INTO THE WALLS WHERE SHE IS CRASHED BENEATH A FALING ROOF.

**25** SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS ARE ATTACKED BY WYVON, CUBES OF WYVON. FIGHTER FINDS A MYSTERIOUS STONE SLICK TO ONE'S CAREFUL BY BURNING.

**26** SURVIVORS SWIM TO AIR-FILLED CHAMBER. WEARING MUSIC UNIFORM, WIZARD IDENTIFIES THE INSTRUMENT AS CATH-TRADING. THEY DECIDE TO REST AND HEAL BEFORE CONTINUING.

**27** A GIANT PILLOWCASE MAKES FINE SLEEPING PLACE FOR TWO MEDIUM ADVENTURERS.

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(Select to view)

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230-HP giants at 1300 P.S.I.! Only the greatest heroes dare to brave...

# STORM KING'S THUNDER

## HOLD OF THE STORM GIANTS

**A Dungeons & Dragons adventure for levels 1-10  
by Christopher Perkins, Jenna Helland,  
Adam Lee and Richard Whitters**

START

Well! Our sea elf contacts failed to mention the giant whirlpool guarding the storm giants' lair! The Apparatus of Kwajish only fits two wizards! But by Hajama, god of courage, we'll survive this!

Don't give up and we'll survive this maelstrom, O fighter, cleric, bard, revised ranger, druid and—!!! **ROGUES! STOP ROLLING NEW CHARACTERS!!!**

1 WHIRLPOOL DRAGS WARSHIP 3,000 FEET UNDERWATER, DESTROYING PALADIN'S 25,000 GP BOAT AND KILLING EVERYONE ONBOARD BELOW 8TH LEVEL.

**2** BELOW 900 FEET, WIZARDS' APPARATUS OF KVALISH BEGINS SPRINGING LEAKS. WIZARD'S FAMILIARS ARE DICED UP AS IF BY HIGH-PRESSURE WATER-JET CUTTERS. WIZARDS ABANDON SHIP IN OTILUKE'S RESILIENT SPHERE.

**26** SEEING ALL IS LOST, WIZARD #2 USES *PASSWALL* ON THE WINDOW, LETTING IN THE OCEAN AND FLOODING THE CASTLE. THE STORM GIANTS ARE TOTALLY UNHARMED, BUT ALL OTHER CREATURES, INCLUDING THE PRISONERS, ARE DROWNED AND PRINCESS MIRRAN'S 300 LBS. OF SAFFRON BECOME UNUSABLE. CLERIC ALON SURVIVES DUE TO *WATER WALK* AND *WATER BREATHING*, BUT SUFFERS CRIPPLING DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS

**FINISH**

20 MORE GUARDS! CLERIC TRIES TO PARLAY, BUT KILLER WHALE, ANGRY AT HAVING HAD TO PERFORM TRICKS FOR THE GIANTS, JOINS WATER BREATHING MULE IN ATTACKING. DRUID DISCOVERS GIANT INSECT SPELL ALSO WORKS TO MAKE GIANT LOBSTERS.

**19** USING THE STONE OF ELEMENTAL SUMMONING, HALFLING AND GNOME ASK EARTH ELEMENTAL TO SWIM THROUGH THE STONE AND BRING BACK ANYTHING OF VALUE. IT RETURNS WITH GIANT-SIZED JEWELRY AND, MORE DISTURBINGLY, 500 LBS. OF GROUND GIANT BONES (VALUABLE FERTILIZER)

21 WIZARD #2 DISPOSES OF MULE & ORCA WHILE DRUID AND HALFLING ARE DISTRACTED. FREE OF ANIMALS, HEROES SWIM TO THRONE ROOM AND BEG SERISSA TO STOP THE GIANT INVASIONS. SEEING THAT HALFLING IS WEARING HER DEAD MOTHER'S NECKLACE AS A SHAWL, SERISSA STOPS LISTENING & BECOMES WROTH.

**22** A BLOODY BATTLE ENSUES. PALADIN IS TRIPLE-SPEARED ON GIANT'S TRIDENT. WIZARD #2 USES TELEKINESIS TO STEAL SERISSA'S MAGIC SCEPTER WHILE SHE SITS ON THE WYRMSKULL THRONE, CAUSING HER TO BECOME PARALYZED.

**25** THE OTHER GIANTS (STILL IN THE SAME ROOM PLAYING MUSIC AFTER ALL THIS TIME) RUSH IN TO ATTACK THE INVADERS. FIGHTER BECOMES A CAIRN OF Boulders. WAILING, DATED FROM GRIE AND ANTHROPOPHAGUS. ALL ASSUME ONE OF THE GIANTS MUST BE THE GNOME "NEW CHARACTER" AND ALLOWS HERSELF TO BE TAKEN PRISONER. DRUID SURRENDERS TO THE PISCATARIAN STORM GIANTS RATHER THAN BE CAPTURED BY THE ANTHROPOPHAGOUS FIRE OR FROST GIANTS.

**23** TO HEROES' SURPRISE, IYMIRTH RIPS OUT SERISSA'S HEART, THEN RUNS THROUGH THE DOORS TO THE NORTH SHOUTING THAT THE PERFIDIOUS SMALL FOLK KILLED SERISSA

**24** GNOME ROGUE RUNS INTO TREASURE ROOM, WHERE SHE IS CRUSHED BENEATH A FALLING ANCHOR.

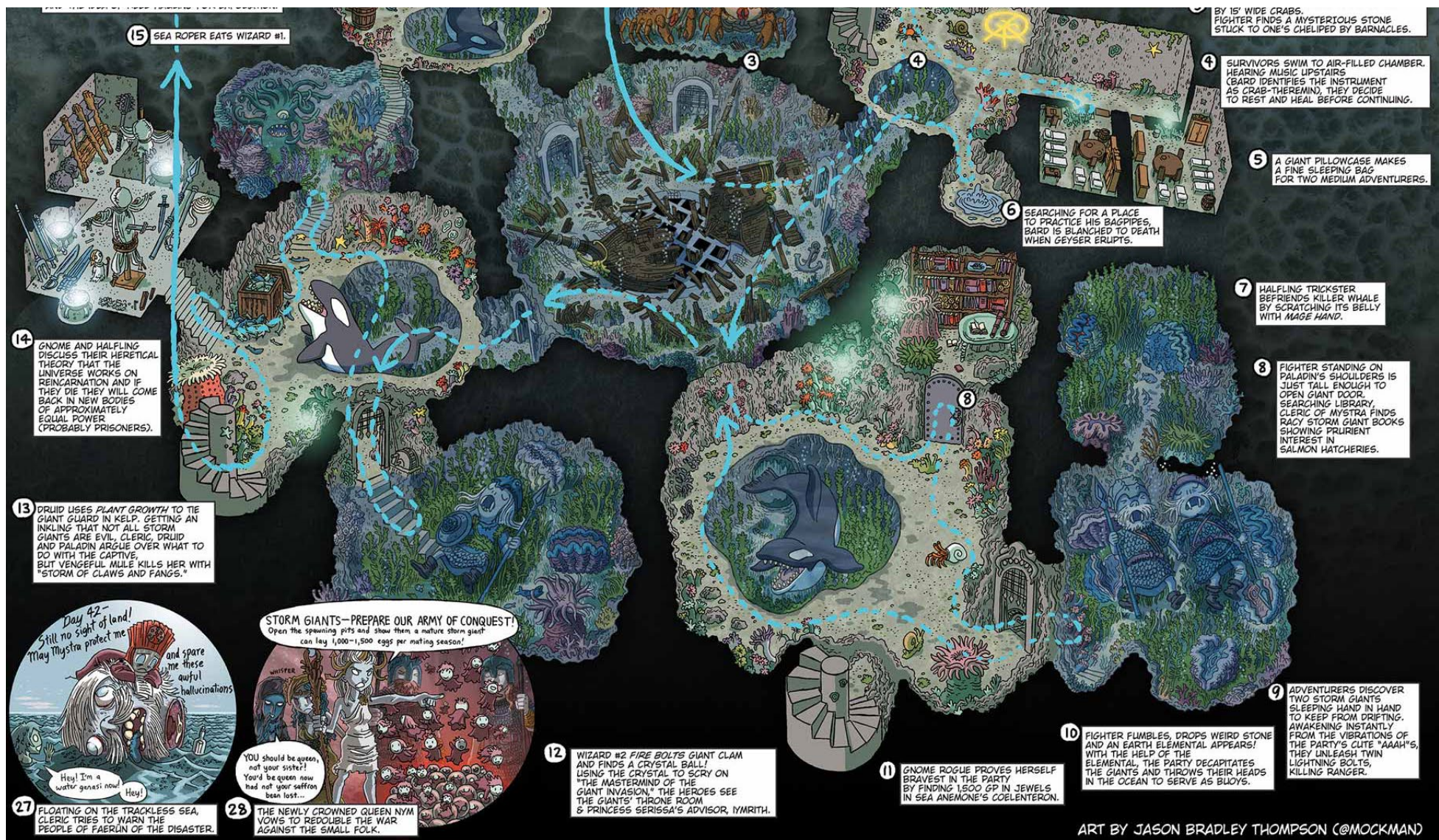
**18** SNEAKING AHEAD TO LOOK FOR PRISONERS, IDEALLY A LIZARDFOLK AND A FIRBOLG, GNOME AND HALFLING FIND A BLOCKED PASSAGE IN THE TEMPLE OF STRONMAUS!

**17** STOPPING FOR RATIONS, CLERIC, DRUID AND PALADIN DEBATE WHETHER STORM GIANTS CAN COOK SINCE THEY LIVE UNDERWATER AND CAN'T START FIRES. WIZARD #2 SUGGESTS THEY SEASON FOOD WITH LIGHTNING, THUNDER, ACID, RADIANT OR NECROTIC DAMAGE. THE DEBATE RAGES.

**16** ADVENTURERS CLIMB STAIRS AND FIND SECRET DOOR TO GIANTS' ARMORY. FIGHTER AND PALADIN ARE AWED BY GIANT WHALEBONE SWORDS, TUBEWORM BLOWDARTS, NUDIBRANCH SHAPERS, AND THE IDEA OF KEEL-HAULING FOR EXFOLIATION.

### 3 SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS ARE ATTACKED







# Next Issue: Dragon 11



**P**repare to roll up your sleeves and get crafty, as *Dragon+* presents our festive D&DIY issue.

There's more field work from the intrepid Volothamp Geddarm in *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, and we find X marks the spot for master cartographer, Mike Schley, who has created some of D&D's most memorable and beautiful maps. We'll also take a look back at user-crafted content in the Neverwinter MMORPG, as well as revealing more about the new *Rock Paper Wizard* card game.



There's more from the Best of the DMs Guild with an in-depth look at a new Priestess Class, further hints and tips on playing D&D in



regulars features like Unearthed Arcana, plus a new Maps of the Month.

Find all this and more in issue 11 of *Dragon*+ coming to you this holiday season.

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A big thank you to the extended D&D family for  
their help with the creation of this issue.

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